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DETECTIVE STORIES

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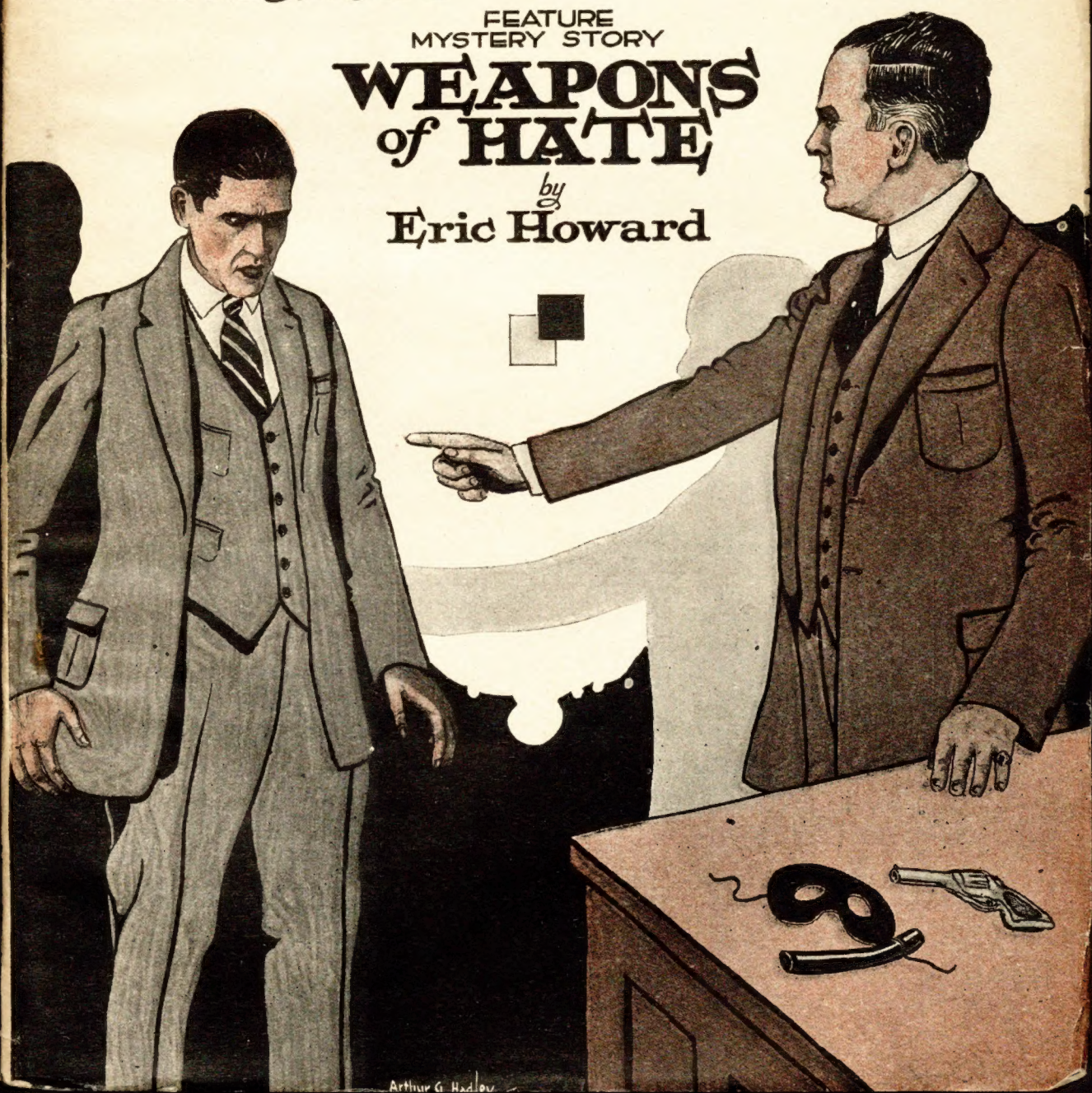
FEATURE MYSTERY STORY

WEAPONS of HATE

by

Eric Howard



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FRANK BLIGHTON is one of the most popular writers of detective fiction, and his work appears in the best magazines published. There is a tremendous element of interest in his stories. We are going to print one of his very best in the next issue of this magazine under the title,

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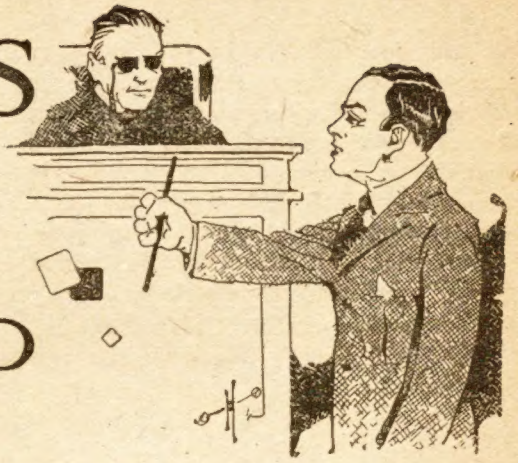
We cannot begin to enumerate the short, pithy articles of all sorts that will fill various corners of our next issue. But you can be assured that they have been selected with the greatest care and, as every one is of vital interest, you cannot fail to enjoy reading them.

THE EDITOR.

WEAPONS of HATE

by

ERIC HOWARD



CHAPTER ONE

WHEN Bill McGinnis, formerly a wild young loafer of the streets but more recently the protégé and chauffeur of John Heywood, the philanthropist, brought the limousine to a stop, and saw that his employer was quite dead, he did a queer thing.

He again took the driver's seat and drove down the boulevard several blocks, as if fleeing from the Heywood mansion. Leaving the car standing, he ran half a block down a side street, into the back-yard of a house, and entered a small garage on the rear of the lot. In the dark garage he emptied two of his pockets into a wooden box and set it upside-down in one corner. Had an observer been present he would have seen that McGinnis thus disposed of a revolver, a blunt piece of iron about ten inches long, a mask and a handkerchief.

Then, making sure that the driveway was deserted, he ran back to the limousine, drove to the Heywood house on the boulevard, and announced to the servants that Mr. Heywood was dead.

The police were immediately notified by the butler. McGinnis could not or would not explain the circumstances of his master's death. The butler assumed the right of authority, since Mr. Heywood had been a widower with no relatives in his house.

As soon as the chief of detectives heard the report he telephoned Starkweather, the district attorney, who accompanied him upon an investigation. Having once convicted McGinnis of a minor offense, and having often cautioned his friend Heywood against the chauffeur, Starkweather immediately formed a theory of the case, which he presented to the detective before the latter could study the evidence.

Two hours after his return to the Heywood house with the body of his employer William McGinnis was locked in a cell in the city prison on a charge of murder.

His first callers were Chief of Detectives Flynn and District Attorney Starkweather, who had decided to their satisfaction that the young fellow was guilty. Only two courses lay open to him—immediate confession of guilt, or a long trial that could only end in the electric chair. They considered it their duty to exact a confession at the earliest possible moment.

Flynn was a tall, slow-spoken man, who wore an air of credulity that was shrewdly calculated to disarm criminals. Starkweather's manner and method were quite different—he was brusque, frankly suspicious and even insulting.

The prisoner felt the district attorney's

unconcealed animosity as soon as he entered the cell. He had good and sufficient reason to know that Starkweather was his enemy, for it had been the district attorney who had interpreted a boyish prank in which some property had accidentally been damaged as a serious crime. Starkweather, and not the evidence in the case, had caused McGinnis to spend eighteen months in prison. Starkweather, and not the testimony of witnesses, had convinced the jury. The smile left the chauffeur's lips and a sullen, angry frown took its place.

"How do you feel, Bill?" Flynn drawled.

"Oh, I'm all right." The smile returned for a moment.

"No pangs of conscience, huh?" snapped Starkweather.

"What for?" With an effort McGinnis restrained himself.

"For the murder of your benefactor, of course." The district attorney turned to the detective. "You know, Flynn"—he ignored the prisoner—"it's a mistake to treat these yellow dogs like human beings. They don't know what gratitude is."

"Damn you!" McGinnis leaped to his feet and would have struck the district attorney in his mad, passionate anger if Flynn had not stepped between them.

"Easy there, Bill"—he spoke soothingly—"I've got to tell you—although I guess you know it, with all your experience—that anything you say'll be used against you, and anything you do, too. Don't go throwin' any fits like that or you'll have two charges against you instead of one. Sit down, now, while we ask a few questions."

"All right. Go ahead. I—I'm sorry I lost my temper."

But it was too late for apology. He looked up into the cold eyes of Starkweather and saw in them a hatred that burned fanatically. With the prosecution in that man's hands he hadn't a chance. He sat down with a feeling of utter hopelessness.

"What do you suppose caused the death of Mr. Heywood?" Flynn drawled, waving a hand to Starkweather as a signal that he should keep out of it—for the present.

"Why, I don't know. I haven't any idea."

"But what do you suppose? If you read about it in the paper, say, what would you guess had happened?"

"Why, heart failure, maybe. I don't know."

"You know what the doctors say? They say that the old man was killed by some pretty strong man, who struck him with a blunt instrument on the crown of the head. What do you think of that theory?"

"Maybe they're right. I suppose doctors ought to know, but I don't see how anybody could have got into the car and out again, because I didn't stop, and I was drivin' pretty fast that night."

"Would you say positively that nobody could've got into the car and struck Mr. Heywood without you knowin' it?" the detective asked in the same gentle drawl.

"I don't see how anybody could," admitted Bill. "But I don't know. Maybe a guy could catch the car on the fly, the same as hoboes do trains, and get out again without me knowin' it."

"But if you were readin' about it in the paper, wouldn't you say it was unlikely that the man who killed Heywood got in that way?"

"Yes, I guess I would."

"Now, tell me what happened when you went to meet Mr. Heywood that evening to take him home."

"He telephoned the house and got me on the wire. He told me to drive right downtown and wait for him at the club. I did just as he said, and stopped the boat right in front of the steps. I waited for a few minutes——"

"About how long, maybe?"

"Not more than five minutes, I guess, and he came out. I got out to open the door, like I always did, and he told me to drive home."

"When you opened the door did you look inside the car?"

"No. But when he got in I did. I picked up a robe off the floor and put it around him, because he wasn't wearin' an overcoat and it was chilly."

"And would you say positively—under

oath, for instance—that when he got into the car he was all alone—that nobody else was in it?"

"Nobody was inside the car when he got in. I would swear he was the only person in the car."

"And after that you started right off?"

"I drove right down Broadway until I came to Morgan street, going about twenty, and hitting it up to thirty whenever I could."

"Would you care to say whether anybody could have got into the car between the time you helped Mr. Heywood in and the time you started?"

"I don't think they could. Maybe, like I said before."

"And then you drove right home, huh? Right down Broadway, through Morgan street to the boulevard, and up the boulevard to Heywood's house? Is that right?"

"Yes."

"You didn't stop at all, huh? No place? And as soon as you discovered the old man was dead you told the servants, huh?"

"I told them as soon as I could." A strange expression flitted over the chauffeur's face, which Flynn pretended not to notice, although he was studying him closely.

"And nothing happened at all between the time you stopped the car and reported his death?"

"No, not a thing." His little detour of several blocks and his concealment of the contents of his pockets in a garage he had either forgotten or did not wish to explain.

"Well, Bill, you answer questions pretty well, but under the circumstances and according to what you've admitted I've got to advise you"—his voice changed suddenly and then crashed accusingly at the youth—"to confess to the murder of John Heywood!"

Before Billy McGinnis could recover from his confused astonishment both Flynn and the district attorney left the cell. He heard the door clang after them and the snap of the automatic lock.

"It's a clear case," he heard Starkweather say. "We've got him, all right. If he doesn't confess I can put him across."

"I guess you're right," agreed the detective. "Looks like he did it."

"Sure he did it."

The prisoner heard no more. He was wondering dimly what he had admitted that made the detective accuse him. The events of the past few hours raced maddeningly through his mind; his memory was a tangle of confusion.

CHAPTER TWO

BY the time the two men had left him alone an "extra" had been printed and circulated through the city. John Heywood's death took one of its finest citizens from the community, and the newspapermen took advantage of the chance it gave them. They wrote long eulogies of the dead man, setting forth his numerous charitable bequests and his record as a business man. Then they described all of the mysterious circumstances of his death, and led up to their own extravagant theories of its cause. Most of the reporters had interviewed either Detective Flynn or the district attorney, and therefore most of them concluded that William McGinnis was guilty. His picture, made during his earlier prison record, with the damning number suspended from his neck, was printed several times, and a detailed account of his record appeared. The average reader could come to only one conclusion.

One of the "extras" found its way to the home of the prisoner's sister while she was engaged in preparing supper for her husband. She gave it an annoyed glance at first, and then screamed. Half an hour later her husband came home to find her avidly reading every line of it and his meal unprepared. In another ten minutes the pair were on their way to the city prison.

They were refused admittance to McGinnis, but were allowed to converse through the bars of his cell. His smile returned when he saw that his visitors were not detectives.

"Hello, Mary. 'Lo, Joe. I thought you'd come as soon as you heard."

"Indeed we did," his sister assured him. "I read it in the paper, and as soon as Joe came in we started, not stopping for supper at all."

Her eyes were wet as she looked at the young man, for she knew that to her he had always been the best possible brother. She had seen enough of jails, though, to know pretty well how serious was his predicament.

Her husband, a rather insignificant-looking little man, said little. He listened while Billy told his story, the same story he had told to Flynn, and made no comment. When it was finished he said:

"Looks bad, Billy. That is, with Starkweather on the job. Of course, it's only circumstantial, but that kind of evidence has hung many a man."

"Joe!" cried his wife. "That's no way to be talking to the boy."

"That's all right, Mary," Billy assured her. "Joe's just thinking out loud again; ain't you, old kid?"

"Uh-huh," said the other, fixing his eyes upon a far corner of the cell. "What I was going to say was this: first, we've got to get you a lawyer, the best we can hire; Then I've got to go over the case myself, and find out where the holes are. You see, I know you're innocent, but it does look bad, according to Starkweather; but somewhere there's a hole. We've got to find that hole."

"That's the stuff, Joe. You go hole hunting, will you? But don't forget a lawyer—I figure a good lawyer can get me out of here pretty quick."

"Yes, a lawyer," agreed his brother-in-law, repeating it like a small boy who is afraid he will forget. "But we must find the hole."

Joe's thinking was a great joke to both Mary and Bill. They knew him for what he was—a small-salaried clerk in an insurance company's office, forgetful, careless, absent-minded. Much as they liked him, they had small respect for his mentality.

"And say, Joe, bring me some tobacco and papers, will you?" Bill asked as they were leaving.

"Oh, I almost forgot," Joe stammered. "Here. I bought these for you."

He passed several boxes of cigarettes through the bars.

"Don't forget the lawyer—and the hole," said Bill, laughing.

"I won't, Bill; you can bet on that."

Joe and his wife walked home through Morgan street, at his insistence. He paid little attention to her continuous talk, and was recalled to it only when she pinched his arm. Several times he stopped; once he walked into the middle of the street and looked up at the buildings on both sides. Mary could not make him out, and had long since quit trying. But the little man was not at all embarrassed by her chaffing.

He continued his silent and unexplained exploration until they crossed the boulevard and turned into their own street. As soon as they got within sight of their own home Mary jerked his arm violently and cried:

"Joe, look at that! We didn't leave the lights on, did we?"

"No, I turned them all out."

Nevertheless their house was lighted in every room, and through the neat lace curtains they made out the figures of moving men. Breaking into a run, they gained the front door and flung it open. They were met on the threshold by a uniformed policeman, and a second later Chief of Detectives Flynn came up to them.

"Sorry to have to do this," he said easily. "But we're looking for evidence against Bill McGinnis."

"You can't enter a man's house without a search warrant." Joe rose dramatically to the occasion.

"Sure, I know it. That's why I got one." The detective showed an official-looking document.

Joe was about to object again when another detective, in plain clothes, entered from the rear of the house.

"Look here, Chief!" he exclaimed. "Here's what I found in the garage."

He handed Flynn a blunt instrument—a short, heavy piece of iron, resembling a chisel, but thoroughly capable of deadly in-

jury in the hands of a strong man like William McGinnis.

Flynn turned sharply to Joe and Mary.

"Is that yours?" he demanded.

"No," they said in one voice.

"Are these yours?" demanded the detective who had just come in, thrusting both hands out at them.

In astonishment they saw that he was holding a mask, a handkerchief on which appeared several drops of blood and an automatic pistol.

"No!" screamed Mary.

"I found these under a box in their parage, Chief. Guess they belong to her brother, huh? He must have ditched them there after beaning old Heywood."

"We'll take prints of 'em," said Flynn, "and see how they match up with Mr. Bill McGinnis's."

The chief and his assistants left the house, leaving Joe and Mary stunned and incredulous.

"Joe," cried Mary, as soon as they were alone, "do you think Bill could have——"

Horror was written large on her face. Joe came out of his dream-like state and put his arms about her.

"Nonsense, Mary, nonsense! I know Bill too well. There's a hole in this case somewhere, and we've got to find it. Those things they found—if they weren't put there for them to find—aren't Bill's any more than they're mine."

He soothed Mary into a restless sleep, but in his persistent, plodding way he stayed awake and devoted most of the night going over every step of that day's happenings, looking, as he expressed it, for the hole in the case.

Bill, too, lay awake until twelve o'clock, when a kindly jailer came up to his cell and handed him a telegram. It said:

"I just read about your arrest. Arrive home tomorrow. Be brave. It will be all right. Love. NORA."

Evidently Bill was waiting for just that, for almost immediately he lay down and fell into a deep, untroubled, smiling sleep.

CHAPTER THREE

"HELLO! This is Flynn. Let me speak to the district attorney, please. Hello, Starkweather. I've got something you'll be interested in over here. Have you seen the morning paper? Yes, we found the stuff under a box in McGinnis's sister's garage. I had fingerprints made last night and looked 'em over. Since, his are there. No mistake. That just about clinches the evidence, doesn't it?"

"You bet it does. I'll come right over. I want to talk to McGinnis after I've seen what you found."

"Sure, Chief—only don't ride him too hard. I'm going to try for a confession."

In ten minutes Starkweather appeared in the detective's private office. The blunt piece of iron, the automatic, handkerchief and mask lay on his desk, mute testimony of McGinnis's guilt.

"He handled them all," said Flynn. "We had his record from his other trial, you know, and it didn't take long to verify the prints. What puzzles me, though, is this: Both the gun and the pipe were handled by Bill McGinnis and my man Stewart, who found 'em. But there's somebody else mixed up in this, for underneath their prints are those of another guy. We haven't been able to find him, but I've got a man looking for his marks now."

"An accomplice, perhaps," commented the district attorney. "These gangsters seldom work alone. Can I see the prisoner now?"

"Sure." Flynn pressed a button and directed that Bill McGinnis be sent in.

Bill had borrowed a razor from another prisoner and shaved himself. His clothes were neatly brushed, his face smooth and glowing, his eyes alight and frank. He looked like a person who had slept well and never been troubled by a guilty conscience. Overnight he had determined not to lose his temper, and not even the sight of the frowning district attorney made him break his vow.

"Sit down, Bill," said Flynn. "Mr. Starkweather has some more questions to ask you."

"Do you know, McGinnis," snapped the

district attorney, "anything about the will John Heywood made two months before he was killed?"

"Yes, sir—a little."

"What?"

"Mr. Heywood told me he was going to leave me five thousand dollars when he died, so I could open up a little garage. I told him it wasn't necessary, as he had done enough for me. I had saved up some money out of my pay, and figured I could start small on my own capital."

"You did, did you?" sneered Starkweather. "How much had you saved?"

"About five hundred dollars."

"Where is it—in the bank?"

"No. I had to draw it out last month." A flush crept over the youth's face.

"What for?"

"I can't tell you that, sir. But I needed it for something."

"How much have you got now—out of your savings, I mean?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Isn't it a fact that you tried to borrow a thousand dollars last week from Sid Brown of the Triangle Garage?"

"Yes, I did," Bill whispered.

"And isn't it a fact that you said to him, when he told you he couldn't lend any money, that you simply *had* to get it somewhere?"

"I guess I said something like that."

"Five thousand dollars would have come in pretty nice about that time, wouldn't it? And the easiest way to get it, didn't you figure, was to kill the man who had willed it to you?"

"I never thought of anything like that. I could have borrowed what I needed from Mr. Heywood, only—only——"

"Yes?"

"Only I didn't like to ask him."

"Rats!" Suddenly the district attorney turned from where he was standing, with his back against the detective's desk, concealing the evidence that had been gathered, and pointed to the incriminating objects that lay there. The prisoner followed his pointing finger to the desk. Then he started back in surprise, which was quickly followed by an attempt to conceal his emotion.

"What did you have those things in your possession for," demanded the district attorney, "if not to kill and rob your employer?"

"I—I didn't have them—yesterday. I haven't had them for—oh, a long time."

"You lie!" cut in Flynn, speaking for the first time. "Your fingerprints are on 'em, and they're fresh. You had those things in your hands yesterday afternoon, at the time you met John Heywood, and you killed him with that." He pointed to the piece of iron.

"I did not. Yes, I had 'em yesterday, but it wasn't my fault—they don't belong to me, and I never meant to use them."

"Who do they belong to?" Flynn followed up.

"I—I don't know," replied McGinnis evasively.

"You're lying again. They're yours, and you meant to use 'em in the killing of John Heywood. If they're not yours, you borrowed 'em for that purpose, and then you struck the old man. Come on, Bill, confess and get it over with—it's a clear case, and you haven't got a chance."

"I tell you I didn't do it," stammered the boy. "Why, listen, Mr. Heywood was the best friend I ever had. Do you think I'd do anything like that? Why——"

"We don't think—we know," broke in Starkweather. "From beginning to end it's a clear case. You had a darn good motive—five thousand dollars. You had the criminal inclination. You had the opportunity, and you did it. When a jury learns what we know, you won't last three minutes. Better confess."

"Not on your life," declared the prisoner. "And, what's more, you'll mighty soon find out that I'm innocent."

At that moment a sergeant of police entered the room.

"There's a jane out here who wants to see the prisoner," he explained. "I told her you had him in here questioning him. But she said she knew you, Chief, and that it would be all right."

Through the door came a smiling, slender girl. Bill McGinnis, murder suspect, answered her smile with one of his own,

and two pairs of blue eyes met. The girl held out her hands and took Bill's in them.

Before she could speak, if she even considered speech necessary, Flynn was on his feet, anger in every line of his face, his muscles taut as though for a spring.

"What the devil are you doing here, Nora? And what do you know of this man?" he thundered at the girl.

"Why, Uncle Michael, I'm here because you've made a great mistake, and have arrested the man I'm going to marry."

CHAPTER FOUR

JOE HARRIS, whose name had appeared in the papers often of late as the law-abiding brother-in-law of the man charged with the murder of John Heywood, suffered the sympathy and the suspicion of his fellow-clerks without a word. Joe did nothing by halves; also he did nothing in a hurry. But his employers valued him as a man who did unimportant work as if were important, and he had little difficulty in explaining to the office manager that it would be necessary for him to have a week off. The manager was convinced that Bill McGinnis was guilty, but he did not hold it against Joe. He gave him a week on pay.

The first day of his vacation Joe called upon ten different lawyers, starting with the best and most expensive—who had a reputation for getting all of his clients off, guilty or innocent, and who also held a political grudge against Starkweather—and ending with the least competent. No one cared to take the case of Bill McGinnis. Two of them frankly admitted that to do so would injure their professional standing. One assured him that it would be futile to waste time and money on a defense when the dead man was as well known and well-beloved as John Heywood. All of them doubted his ability to make it worth their while to take the case.

Joe argued with them, but was not greatly disappointed when he got no results. He had expected them to take just that attitude. Still, he reflected, he simply must engage a lawyer before going home or Mary would give him no peace. Entering a drugstore, he went to the telephone directory and drew his finger blindly down the list of attorneys, letting it stop at a name he did not know. The attorney's office was in the next building. Joe made his way there, neither hopeful nor depressed. To accept whatever came into his life was Joe's phlegmatic temperament.

He entered the door bearing the attorney's name, and was embarrassed to discover a young man and a girl, evidently the lawyer's stenographer, in the midst of hearty laughter. They did not stop laughing when he entered; in fact, they paid no attention to him at all.

Joe cleared his throat and tried to speak. Then the young man turned toward him, still laughing, and said:

"I'll bet a dollar you're not a client."

Joe merely nodded his head.

"What? You are?" cried the lawyer. "Hooray! Stop smiling, Miss Brown. Instantly, I say! It's a client. Step in here, sir, and we shall discuss your case at once. Busy as we are with the many details of our trials, we are indeed gratified to know that our reputation is spreading and our clientele growing."

The girl went into another peal of merriment, and the young lawyer eyed her sternly. Joe entered the private office to which he was directed.

"Yes, sir," he said. "If you'll take the case, I'll pay whatever I can."

"Money is no object," responded the lawyer, demostrating the truth of his remark by displaying a billfold innocent of bills. "What's the case?"

"It's the defense of my brother-in-law, who is charged with the Heywood murder. But he's innocent, sir, absolutely innocent."

"The Heywood murder? Never heard of it. But that doesn't matter. Nothing to do with Mr. John Heywood, has it?"

"Why, of course, sir—he was killed, or died. Anyway, he's dead. Why, the papers are full of it."

"I never read the papers. Never have time. My practice is too large."

Joe didn't know whether to laugh or to be sympathetic. There was an unmistak-

able newness about the books and furnishings of the office, and indeed about the lawyer himself. His conduct seemed to Joe decidedly unprofessional.

Nevertheless he set forth the details of the case in his simple, logical way. The lawyer listened casually, looking out of the window, with his hands behind his head. Several times he yawned, once he got up and took a law book out of the case and then put it back in the same place. He made no notes, didn't even interject a question or interrupt to demand more data until Joe stated that one of the worst bits of evidence against Bill happened to be the fact that John Heywood had bequeathed him five thousand dollars.

"Worst?" the young lawyer demanded. "What are you talking about? Do you mean to tell me that the district attorney is trying to convict a man of murder to whom John Heywood had promised to give that much money?"

"Yes, sir. That's the motive it all rests on, don't you see?"

"Why, man, you're crazy!" politely exclaimed the lawyer. "You don't have to tell me another thing. Surely I'll take the case. Now get out and let me get to work."

"Thank you. Now about the fee, sir?" asked Joe tentatively.

"Don't bother me with trifles"—the lawyer waved him aside—"can't you see I'm thinking?"

Joe left the room on tiptoe. In the outer office he paused for a moment to survey the girl, who was now busily typing with an astonishing rapidity. In all of his years as an office-worker Joe could not remember having seen so expert a typist. She glanced up at him questioningly as he paused.

"I would like to know," he said, then hesitated.

"Yes?"

"Is he—Mr. Langdon, I mean—is he all right? You know, mentally, I mean."

"Did he take your case? What's it all about? You might as well tell me, because I'll find out soon enough, anyway."

He told her.

"The Heywood murder case," she cried. "Gee, I thought that guy was guilty. Well, if my boss took it, leave it to him."

"I thought he might be just a little off," apologized Joe, edging toward the door. "He wouldn't talk about the fee at all. I hope he won't charge too much."

"No fear. He won't charge half enough, so don't let that worry you."

Before Joe could reach the door the lawyer himself burst out of his private office and caught him by the arm.

"Tell me this," he whispered. "Is there a girl in it? Is this McGinnis boy in love?"

"Why, I don't know," said Joe.

"Come on, then, we'll go right over and find out. If he isn't in love he's got to fall in love right away. Come on."

"You'd better wear your hat, Mr. Langdon, if you're going out," his stenographer called after him.

"Well, where is it?" he demanded. In answer the girl reached up and took his hat off a hook and tossed it to him. Then the lawyer propelled Joe out of the door and steered him toward the express elevator.

On the way to the prison, feeling that the lawyer should be informed of everything that had a bearing on the case, Joe began to speak. He explained in detail about finding the weapons in his garage, and the prosecution's attempt to fasten their possession as clues of guilt upon Bill. But the lawyer was only interested, for the moment, in the romantic phase of the situation.

He handed his card to the sergeant in the station.

"I'm representing Mr. McGinnis. I would like to consult with him at once, sergeant."

"There's a young lady calling on him right now. She's got five minutes more. You can go in as soon as she comes out."

"Thank you!"

They sat down to wait, the lawyer gazing speculatively at his highly polished shoes and ignoring his companion. Joe was afraid to interrupt his thoughts because he didn't want to be rebuked again, so he himself fell to thinking about the "hole in the case." He was tracing again in his mind the movements of Bill the day before, when the door opened and Nora Flynn came out. She nodded and smiled to the sergeant and stepped lightly toward the door.

"I beg your pardon," said the lawyer, ris-

ing. "May I ask you if you are interested in my client, Mr. McGinnis?"

"Yes—very much indeed," the girl blushed.

"Good. Will you please call at my office tomorrow morning at ten o'clock? Thank you!" He handed her one of his cards.

"Man alive!" he cried as he watched her out of the door. "Did you see those Irish eyes? This case is as good as won right now. Bill McGinnis is a free man. No jury can convict a man with a girl like that."

Joe was about to protest that the evidence in the case, perhaps, meant more to a jury than the state of Bill's heart, when the lawyer turned on him and said:

"You needn't wait for me. I'll see McGinnis alone. Come to my office tomorrow morning about ten."

Leaving Joe, he turned to follow the sergeant into the room where his client waited. Scratching his head in perplexity, Joe made his way out of the station and walked slowly to Morgan street. He was still hunting for the hole in the case.

"Hello, McGinnis! My name's Langdon. I've been engaged to defend you. Your brother-in-law has told me all I need to know just now about the case. And I've seen the young lady who just left. Now, tell me two things, please: Are you engaged to marry the lady? Yes? Good. That's fine. Now tell me about the weapons they found in your sister's garage. Where'd you get them?"

Langdon fired the questions at Bill as rapidly as he could speak, evidently cognizant of the psychological law that a man taken unawares has no time for the defense of falsehood, unless he be a more subtle criminal than young McGinnis. Under cover of the questions the lawyer scrutinized Bill closely without letting him know it.

"That part of it looks pretty bad, I guess," the prisoner replied to his query. "I don't expect a jury will believe what I have to say. You see, Starkweather knows I was in need of money and that I tried to borrow a thousand dollars not long ago. I had to tell him, too, I had drawn out my savings, but I couldn't tell him what for. But it was for a pal of mine that needed it pretty bad, and it was from him I got the gun and the mask and the rest of the stuff. I took it away from him because I didn't want him to use it again doing crooked work. I guess it sounds pretty fishy, don't it?"

"Never mind how you think it sounds. That part's up to me now, and you don't have to worry about it at all. Where's the man you took these things from?"

"That's the worst part of it. He—he's in hiding. You see, I knew him up there—in the prison—and he escaped. I owed him a lot, so I had to help him. That makes it bad, don't it? Nobody'd believe that, would they? And it makes me a criminal because I helped him."

"M-m! Yes, it looks bad, and it sounds unconvincing," the lawyer murmured thoughtfully. Now, listen to me, Bill McGinnis. I'll take your case and get you out of this if you'll tell me the absolute truth, and trust me completely. Otherwise, you're headed straight for the electric chair. What you've just told me is either the absolute truth or a very bad lie—which is it? Remember, your life probably depends upon it."

"It's the truth, sir." Bill McGinnis's clear eyes met the lawyer's unswervingly, and his chin had that stubborn set it always took when his honesty was attacked.

"I believe you. Shake! Now write down this pal's name, and any aliases he may have, and where I might be able to find him."

"No, sir, I can't——"

"Listen. I promise not to reveal what you write. I'll find him myself, or he won't be found. And I won't use any coercion or threats to make him testify. Now, write what I tell you."

Under the spell of Langdon's personality, which seemed to be a chameleon thing, changing from nonsense to dramatic seriousness, Bill wrote. The lawyer got up to leave him, then turned and said:

"Don't answer any more questions for Flynn and Starkweather. If they ask you anything, just grin, and tell 'em to come to me. Don't forget the grin. And don't worry if you don't hear from me for several days or a week. I'll be busy on your case just the same. Also, let the coroner's

inquest be held today and decline the services of counsel. Let 'em take it to the Superior Court, because we don't want to be bothered with making two defenses. Understand?"

"Yes, sir."

Bill didn't know much about lawyers, but he began to wonder, as soon as Langdon had left him, if he hadn't been a fool to trust him. He had given him the name of his pal. Langdon might succeed in finding him, though that was doubtful, and if he did he might send him back to the gray walls of the State prison. But there was something about Langdon that inspired confidence; Bill felt that his case was as good as won.

"Don't forget the grin," he reminded himself, and began to practice it for his next session with Starkweather and Flynn.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE coroner's inquest, that gruesome preliminary of murder trials, was held that afternoon. In the absence of any attempt at defense by the accused prisoner the jury quickly remanded him for trial on a charge of murder in the first degree to the criminal department of the Superior Court. As soon as this was done it was the district attorney's plan to exact a confession from the accused man, or to hasten his actual trial while public sentiment was still aroused against him.

Less important trials were set aside or shifted to other courts in order that William McGinnis might be sent more speedily to his doom. Starkweather, ordinarily a kindly enough man, was now a creature of that exacting god, vengeance. He considered himself duty-bound to avenge the death of John Heywood, and the more quickly McGinnis was sentenced and executed the more complete would be the vengeance.

The trial was thus set for the tenth day after the death of Heywood, and the case was to be tried before Judge Wells, another friend of the deceased.

Meanwhile the newspapers continued at white heat in their demands for justice, and their pleas were tempered by only one note of human interest and sympathy. An alert reporter had discovered that the alleged criminal was engaged to marry the niece of Chief of Detectives Flynn. The picture of Nora Flynn, that of the detective and that of the prisoner appeared in a design ornamented by hearts and cupids. In an interview Nora insisted that Bill was innocent and would be so proven. Her uncle was equally certain of his guilt.

But Bill McGinnis became aware of a change in the detective's manner toward him. Flynn was no longer applying detective methods in urging a confession upon the prisoner, and Bill thought he detected a hope, if not a belief, that he might be innocent.

To Starkweather, Flynn swore that it was useless to seek a confession, and said nothing when the district attorney assured him that Bill was a hardened criminal.

"Whether he confesses or not doesn't matter," said the district attorney. "We've got a strong case against him, and I'll get a conviction in a day."

Bill remembered his grin throughout most of the coroner's inquest, especially when Starkweather painted him as the most villainous gangster ever allowed to remain at large in the peaceful little city. He was helped in the always difficult task of keeping his temper by the presence of Nora Flynn. He concentrated upon her, and forgot that he was the prisoner at the bar. Langdon, his lawyer, did not appear.

Indeed, at the time of the inquest the lawyer might have been found in a distant and squalid part of the city, sensationally known as Rogues' Roost. It was a heterogeneous quarter—inhabited by foreigners mostly, and a haven for those who could not enter the streets of respectability safely. Since his visit to his client in prison Langdon had spent most of his time in this section. Dressed in worn clothes, he left his large practice in the hands of the capable Miss Brown and prowled the dirty streets like one of their denizens.

Turning at the corner of a particularly noisome alley, he walked through it until

he came to an unlighted doorway. The door was closed, but it gave to his touch and he felt his way along the dark hall and stumbled as his foot collided with a bottom stair. He walked slowly three flights and turned to the right at the top, proceeding to a door at the very end of the hall. He tried the door, but found it locked and bolted. He knocked. No answer came from within. Then he got down on his knees and endeavored to look into the room through the keyhole, but could see nothing.

Langdon paused to deliberate for a moment. Then a smile crossed his face and he walked away, making considerable noise. He continued down one flight of stairs, and then turned and crept softly back to the door again. Just as he reached it, it opened slightly and he could sense the presence of a man in the thin crack of light that filtered through. He shrank back into the shadows and waited. The door opened another inch, and then another. Then he saw the barrel of an automatic pointed through the crack.

"Turn that gat the other way," he whispered casually. "I've got a message from Bill McGinnis."

"Come in." The man within whispered the command, and backed away from the door. Langdon entered the room,

It was almost bare of furnishings. There was one chair, which had evidently served as an auxiliary bar for the locked door, and only one window. The shade was drawn, but so badly torn at the top that it let in enough sunlight to illuminate the walls. On the floor below the window there was a mattress and two blankets.

The man in hiding held the automatic at his side. His face was unshaved and dirty, his clothing ragged, and he eyed the lawyer suspiciously.

"Well, spill the message," he demanded after a moment.

"Here it is," said Langdon, smiling as he handed the other a newspaper clipping.

He watched the man's face as he stumbled through the words of the account. Langdon had selected just that clipping because it set forth briefly the discovery of the weapons by the detectives and also reported that the fingerprints of another, and as yet unknown, criminal appeared upon them. And also because it told the man that his friend was in prison on a charge of murder.

Langdon was counting greatly upon the man's response. He was hoping that this prison pal of his client's would be man enough to testify for Bill McGinnis, even if it placed him in danger. Unless he could win this testimony he was afraid he could not clear his client.

Whatever emotions the man had were under control. His face was expressionless. He looked calmly from the clipping to the lawyer.

"Who are you?" he asked.

The lawyer told him, and also informed him that Bill had only given his name and possible whereabouts on the promise that he would not violate the confidence.

"And you can trust me," Langdon concluded.

The other pocketed his gun and drew out a chair for his visitor.

"What do you want me to do?" he demanded.

"I want you to tell the truth about you and Bill to the jury when the time comes."

There was a silence that lasted several minutes, during which the lawyer paid no attention to the criminal, but sat with folded arms looking at the little patch of sky he could see through the torn window-shade. At last the man in hiding spoke:

"Yes, I can trust you, and I can trust Bill. But I can't guarantee to trust myself, mister. It's this way: if I'm a witness in Bill's trial, they'll send me back to that hell-hole. If I'm not, I've got a chance to get away and start over. It's me against Bill, see? Bill's a good kid, and I'd like to help him out, but I won't guarantee to appear as a witness when that hell-hole's starin' me in the face. It's a gamble, the way I see it, and it all depends on whether there's enough nerve left in me or not. I'll tell you what I'll do. You beat it, and don't try to find me, and don't spy on me at all, see? You say the trial won't start for nine days. All right. You come back here then, and you'll either find me here ready to testify for Bill, and to go back—up there—or you won't find

me at all. That's my proposition. You can take it or leave it."

Langdon continued to stare aimlessly at the sky, but in his mind he was rapidly turning over the gambling odds. There was much at stake. If he took the chance and lost, Bill's life was in danger. If he didn't take it, he would have to violate his oath to Bill, and to this man, and, even then, he might not succeed in foiling that business-like automatic. The man was desperate, and would use it, Langdon knew, upon himself in any extremity. All this he thought as he gazed through the torn shade. Suddenly he got to his feet.

"Fair enough," he smiled and thrust out his hand. "I accept your proposition, and I'll call again in nine days. So long. Hope I'll see you again."

He turned and left the room. But all the way down the dark stairs of that dungeon-like building, and on through the squalid streets of Rogues' Roost, he alternately cursed and congratulated himself upon his folly or wisdom. It all rested, in the last analysis, upon the manhood of that hunted creature up in the foul, third-floor room.

CHAPTER SIX

WHEN Joe Harris was dismissed by Langdon at the prison he walked directly to Morgan street. He went over the route taken by John Heywood's car on the night of his death, walking first on one side of the street and then on the other, keeping an alert eye upon everything and everybody. Joe was still in quest of what he termed the "hole in the case." As yet he had not even found a clue. His mind did not work with the speed and precision of Langdon's; instead he proceeded slowly from fact to theory, gathering and sorting his facts carefully, and hesitating long before giving them the permanence of theories.

Thought, to Joe, was downright laborious, and he perspired freely as he went back and forth along the street, observing and thinking. He noted the work of the laborers who were digging out the cobblestones of the old thoroughfare. He looked at the piles of rock, gravel and sacks of cement that lined the pavement. He made a mental note of where the lanterns were placed, and he observed two men who seemed to have charge of them.

The street was still in use. It was too important a channel of commerce to be closed to traffic until that was absolutely necessary. An occasional wagon or truck passed through; at less frequent intervals a motor car. Once a taxi sped over the rough way, taking a short-cut to the railroad station. All of these things Joe saw, and he made mental notes upon them.

He had about decided to go home when he recalled his habit of buying a paper at a certain corner each evening. Joe turned and started toward the newsstand. As he was about to leave Morgan street, still without a theory, a touring car that had come from a few blocks away attempted to cross the street. It struck a deep rut, and the driver, a woman of slender build, was almost thrown from the car. In spite of her attempts to control it, the car struck a fire-plug and smashed its left front wheel.

Almost immediately a crowd gathered. The woman was unhurt except for the shock. A policeman appeared and investigated. One of the men in the crowd asserted loudly that the street should be closed and kept closed until the work was finished.

Joe stood still for a moment, then went toward the car and looked closely at the number. He fumbled in his pocket for pencil and paper, but could not find them. Then he went on down the street, mumbling over and over to himself the number on the license plate.

At home he found Nora Flynn and the chief of detectives. The latter had come, at Nora's insistence, to call upon Mary, and hear from her how good a brother Bill McGinnis had always been. He listened politely to all she and Nora said, but he had to tell them that they were only character witnesses, and that the evidence in the case pointed unmistakably toward the guilt of Bill. When Joe arrived, the detective was reiterating his statement.

"I'm sorry for you, Mrs. Harris, and I'm

sorry for Nora; but I tell you I'm a detective first of all, and it's my duty to see the guilty man punished for this crime. So I've gathered the evidence, and it looks like your boy is guilty, and Starkweather will make it look that way to the jury. I don't see what any of us can do now, and I'd advise you and Nora to pray for the boy's soul."

He got up and started to leave the room. Mary was in tears; Nora smiled, but with an effort.

"Just a minute, Chief," interrupted Joe. "I think you and Starkweather have made a great mistake. All of your evidence is circumstantial, and therefore wrong. Now Langdon, the lawyer we've engaged——"

"And why did you hire that young fool?" demanded Flynn, goaded beyond endurance by the difficulties of performing his duty both as an officer of the law and an uncle to the niece he loved.

"You wait and see," replied Joe cryptically. "Langdon's the best lawyer of his age in the city."

He did not add that he was the only one who seemed willing to take Bill's dubious case.

"He's a comedy fool, that's what he is," snapped Flynn, completely out of patience. "Haven't I seen him in his fine clothes hanging around the police court tryin' to get a case? He has no practice at all, and it's a queer kind of an idea you have of a good lawyer, Mr. Harris."

With that he was gone, and poor Joe was left alone to bear the attack of both Mary and Nora for his selection of legal advice. If they could have known that the lawyer was even then gambling with the life of his client their attack would have been even more bitter.

Ignoring them as soon as the first wave of their angry despair swept over him, Joe went to the telephone and called Langdon's office.

"No, sir," Miss Brown answered him. "Mr. Langdon's playing golf just now. Who's speaking, please? Oh, Mr. Harris? About the McGinnis case? Oh, yes; one moment, and I'll tell you what message he left. Hello! Yes, before he left the office Mr. Langdon said to tell you that he has worked out a perfect defense, and not to worry. He expects you here tomorrow morning."

"But I must see him today," said Joe desperately. "Where can I reach him?"

"He doesn't like to be disturbed," argued Miss Brown, "but if you're sure it is important I'll get him for you, and you can talk to him on the wire."

"All right."

"Good-by. I'll call you back."

Joe had no sooner hung up the receiver than the bell rang.

"Hello! This is Langdon. What's up?"

"Well, I noticed something today in Morgan street. I want to tell you about it. It's very important and I don't want to talk over the telephone."

"Come right down to the office then."

"Will you be there soon?"

"Will I be here soon?" echoed the lawyer. "I'm here now. Come on."

"Oh, I thought you were playing golf." Joe felt the need of apologizing.

"Playing golf? What kind of a lawyer do you think I am? Certainly I'm playing golf to any one not connected with the case of Bill McGinnis. And let me tell you this. If what you have to say isn't important I'll play golf with your head. Hurry up."

Before he replaced the receiver Joe fancied he heard the merry laughter of Langdon and Miss Brown. But he hurried so fast that he arrived at the lawyer's office breathless.

As soon as he could he plunged into a tentative statement of the theory he had worked out. Langdon listened in his usual bored way until Joe had almost come to his conclusion. Then the lawyer rudely interrupted, leaped up and paced the floor, going on with the theory, adding to it and making it more logical and convincing than Joe could ever have done. At last he paused.

"That's it, of course. Just what I've been trying to arrive at. Young man"—Joe was at least ten years Langdon's senior, but that fact made him no less a Solomon—"young man, you have a good mind. Come with me. Now that we know what happened, or at least what might have happened, we shall prove that we are right—or wrong. Yes,

my boy, you have imagination and intellect. Come along."

Out of the building and into the street they ran, Joe trailing after the lawyer. At the first corner the latter hailed a taxicab and pushed Joe into it. Then he turned to the chauffeur.

"Go down Broadway to Morgan," he directed slowly. "Then turn up Morgan, driving as fast as you can, without breaking the springs, to the boulevard. After that drive to the Heywood home on that street. Understand?"

"Sure, I gotcha. You're another pair of amateur dicks, tryin' to solve the murder mystery, ain't yer?"

"Son," said Langdon solemnly, "you have imagination and intellect."

Then the cab started and traversed the route of Heywood's car.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ON the day of the trial the court-room was filled with the best and the worst of the city's people. Friends and admirers of the dead man sat side by side with enemies of the district attorney. Starkweather and two assistants entered the room early and arranged their books and papers massively upon the counsel table. Flynn came in a moment later, followed by the men who had accompanied him on his raid of Joe's house.

Reporters from all three of the city's dailies sat inside the rail. The spectators buzzed like a hive of furious bees as Bill McGinnis was led into the room by a jailer. Without looking at the crowd Bill took his place at the table. Slowly, then, he turned toward the evidence, which seemed to him a sea of hate. Then he made out the face of Nora Flynn, in the front row, and beside her Joe and Mary Harris. He smiled to them, and immediately they were the objects of whispered comment by the other spectators.

Then Judge Wells came through the door that led to his chambers and took his place on the bench. The bailiff struck the desk sharply with his gavel and commanded silence.

Strangely, the counsel for the defense, Mr. Langdon, was conspicuous by his absence. Bill sat alone at his side of the table, while opposite him the three prosecutors arrayed their books and papers and made ready for the attack.

"The people are ready," announced Starkweather in reply to the court's question. "But counsel for the defense seems to be late."

A frown crossed the stern face of the judge. He was noted locally for his rigid sense of judicial propriety. He had fined lawyers for contempt of court for keeping him waiting five minutes. Before he could snap out a sarcastic comment all eyes turned from him to the rear door of the court-room.

The man who stood there might have been mistaken for a celebrated actor, or a member of fashionable society, who did nothing all day long but change from one kind of clothes to another; or he might have been a model for the artists who draw posters for the clothing manufacturers. He was arrayed in ultra-correct morning clothes, from the top of his silk hat, which he now removed, to the neutral-toned spats, which were an exact match for his gray tie. A light cane swung from one arm, and as he marched proudly down the aisle he removed the bright yellow gloves he had worn.

It was Langdon, counsel for the defense.

But it was not his clothing alone, unprecedented as that was in the city of little pretense, that won the attention of every one in the room. As soon as he removed his silk hat it was seen that he wore a neat and immaculately white bandage over his head. It resembled a turban of the Orientals, and gave an added stature and dignity to his naturally tall body.

Taking his place at the table, he bowed to the judge and to the prosecutors.

"I deeply regret, Your Honor," he said in his deep voice, "that an unfortunate accident prevented me from arriving quite on time. I hope I have not kept the court or the gentlemen of the prosecution waiting."

Judge Wells grumbled what might be con-

sidered an acceptance of his apology and directed the clerk to read the indictment of the People *versus* William McGinnis.

The jury was chosen quickly, to every one's surprise, but mostly to the astonishment of Starkweather. On his part he rejected only those talesmen who might be suspected of sympathy toward the defendant, because they were, like him, in some degree outside the law. Therefore he selected men who had known and admired the dead man and who might reasonably be supposed to see justice done. Langdon listened to the examination of talesmen without interest, devoting more attention to the crease of his trousers than to what was going on.

Then Starkweather set forth to the jury what he would prove. His statement was clear, logical and convincing. The district attorney knew he was right, and let others know it. Langdon arose after he had finished and said briefly:

"May it please the court and gentlemen of the jury, the defense will prove simply that the district attorney's theory of what happened on the evening of John Heywood's death is erroneous, and that the defendant is innocent of the crime charged in the indictment."

Starkweather proceeded at once to the examination of his witnesses. Flynn was the first to take the stand, and under the district attorney's questioning told briefly of his talks with the defendant, and of his own investigation of the death of Heywood. The other detectives were then examined, and their testimony corroborated that of their chief.

Langdon had only one question to ask of these witnesses. He directed it to Flynn:

"Is it true that Miss Nora Flynn, your niece, is engaged to marry the defendant?"

Before the district attorney could interpose an objection Flynn replied evasively that he didn't know.

"Yes, I am," came the clear voice of Nora from the first row. The bailiff banged his gavel and demanded silence, and the judge frowned a warning at the girl.

Starkweather next examined Sid Brown, from whom McGinnis had attempted to borrow money, the paying-teller of the bank from which he had withdrawn his small account, the Heywood butler and other servants, and then recalled Flynn to identify the weapons that had been found in the Harris garage.

His presentation of this evidence was so clear and implacable that perhaps every unbiased person in the court-room was convinced of the defendant's guilt. Many wondering glances passed over the room. What could the counsel for the defense have in mind, if anything? He did not cross-examine the state's witnesses, and seemed to accept the whole of Starkweather's array of damning facts, from the report of the coroner, that Heywood had died as the result of a blow on the head with a blunt instrument, to the possession of a blunt instrument by the defendant.

Swift as the trial progressed, it required the whole morning for the district attorney to conclude his case. Then he rested, and the court adjourned until two o'clock.

During the early part of the afternoon Langdon seemed to get nowhere. He put Mary Harris and Nora Flynn on the stand, and had them testify to Bill's kindly disposition and good character. But they had nothing to say that disproved the conclusive evidence of the district attorney. In an unexpectedly kindly way Starkweather examined both of the women, and made them admit that Bill had a prison record, that he was often unruly and quick-tempered, and that when angry he often committed acts for which he later seemed to be sorry. In short, he made it clear to the jury that the testimony of two women who were unfortunate enough to love a criminal did not make him less vicious.

Paying no heed to the fact that his own witnesses had made damaging admissions, Langdon asked the clerk to call Mr. Samuel Griggs. Starkweather turned in astonishment as he heard the name. Griggs made his way up the aisle and took the stand. Starkweather at once recognized him as a man he had convicted of grand larceny three years before, whose escape from prison had been reported recently in the papers.

"Mr. Griggs," said Langdon clearly, "do you know the defendant in this case?"

"I do."

"Where did you first meet him?"

"In prison—he was my cellmate."

"Has your acquaintance with him always been amicable? I mean, are you good friends?"

"Yes; he's the best friend I ever had, and the squarest kid that ever got framed up." The witness glared malevolently at the district attorney.

"When you recently arrived in this city, did you meet the defendant? If so, please state what happened."

Starkweather jumped to his feet and objected that the witness' testimony was incompetent, inasmuch as the man was an escaped convict. He asked the court to have him placed in custody at once.

"If the court pleases," interrupted Langdon smoothly, "I beg to differ with the learned district attorney. Mr. Griggs is not an escaped convict. I have in my pocket a pardon from the Governor of the State. The witness is a free man."

He presented the pardon to the court. Starkweather, amazed by this unforeseen development, and the witness himself as much overwhelmed, rushed to the side of the judge. Then Griggs sprang to Langdon's side and grasped his hand.

"Thanks, sir—you did this for me, I know, but I don't see how you did it. You are square—and I'm darn glad I'm here."

No one in the court-room, not even Starkweather, could have doubted the man's honest emotion.

"Objection overruled!" said the judge, dryly. "Proceed, Mr. Langdon."

Langdon again asked the witness to tell what had happened when he arrived from prison. Griggs seemed suddenly to become a new man. Before he had been sullen, timid, and perhaps malevolent, expecting arrest at any minute. Now he was free, and his voice carried conviction as he spoke.

"I broke jail," he explained, "because my wife is sick out West. I had to get to her. And I came here because Bill McGinnis was the only man I knew that I could trust, and because I needed his help. Well, I got it. My wife had to have money right away, and Bill gave me all he had—five hundred dollars. I needed more to get to her, and he tried to borrow some. He wanted to get a thousand dollars for me because I had told him that it would take that for me to get a start. Well, he couldn't get it—and I didn't want to take his money, anyway. But I was desperate. I figured if I could get just a thousand I could get away clean and have a new start. So I made some plans to raise the dough. I was startin' after it when Bill McGinnis there came to me and told me he was goin' to try to borrow the money from Mr. Heywood, the man he worked for. Well, I wouldn't hear of him goin' into debt like that for me. I told him I could go out and collect the money in my own way, and was goin' to do it. Then he saw what I meant—he saw the 'gat' I had, and that piece of crowbar the dicks thought belonged to him, and the mask. Then we had a battle. He tried to take 'em away from me; finally he did, but not before he had knocked me cold an' I had bloodied him up a bit.

"First thing I knew, then, he was kneelin' over me, throwin' water in my face, and tellin' me he didn't mean to hurt me, but he wouldn't let me go crooked. He made me promise him then and there that I wouldn't do anything criminal. After the beatin' he gave me I had to promise—I couldn't do anything else.

"Then I hid away in a room he got for me, and I was there a couple of days before Mr. Landgon here came and found me. That was the first I knew about Bill bein' arrested; but you can take it from me that he ain't guilty! And I'm here to say that he wouldn't have had anything in his pockets that night if he hadn't been the squarest pal a guy ever had!

"And as for him croakin' John Heywood—say, he loved that man like he was his father. Don't you believe it. Bill McGinnis is square, and he wouldn't kill nobody, let alone the best friend he ever had."

"You may take the witness," Langdon told Starkweather.

Starkweather took him with a vengeance. He began an attack that would surely have broken and confused the Griggs that had entered the court-room a few minutes be-

fore, but it had no effect upon the Griggs whose pardon was already signed by the Governor, and who was free to go his own way on the road of a new start. Starkweather's attack, indeed, had an effect the reverse of that he intended, for at every opportunity Griggs reiterated that Bill McGinnis was the squarest pal a man could have, and that the charge against him was absurd. Then the district attorney tried a new tack.

"You say you were found by Mr. Langdon?" he asked. "Where, and under what circumstances?"

"If the court pleases," interrupted Langdon, "what occurred there has no real bearing upon this case, I can assure the prosecutor, and if he will waive this part of the examination——"

"Sir, I will conduct the examination as I see fit!" retorted the district attorney.

Langdon said nothing, but under his breath Bill McGinnis heard him hum softly, "Give a calf enough rope——" The witness went on:

"He found me where I was hidin' out in the room Bill got me. He told me what Bill was up against and that he wanted me to testify for him. I saw right away it was my freedom against Bill's chances, and I wasn't sure I could do it—take the chance of going back for another two years. So I made a proposition with him, a sort of gamble. I said he'd have to leave it to me, and if I had the nerve I'd be here; if I didn't have he'd never find me. He let it go at that—and here I am."

Then he didn't offer you a pardon and promise to intercede in your behalf, did he?"

"No, sir. He left it to me to decide whether I was man enough to help out my friend even if it sent me back to jail. I was pretty doubtful myself, but he didn't seem to be. When he beat it all he said was 'Fair enough! Hope I'll see you again!' I didn't know a thing about the pardon, an' never expected it until just now, when he pulled it out of his pocket."

"It seems, Your Honor," observed the district attorney, sarcastically, "that counsel for the defense has laid himself liable to the criminal charge of aiding and abetting an escaped convict."

"Luckily for me," laughed Langdon, "the escaped convict turns out to be a pardoned man. You can't prosecute me, sir. I refer you to the celebrated case of Hargreaves *versus* the State of Maryland."

"Is it your habit, Mr. Langdon," asked the judge, "to take such chances in the defense of your clients?"

"Like the late John Heywood, Your Honor, I always take a chance on the manhood of a real man!"

As if to prove his point Langdon next called two men who had been with Heywood and Starkweather in his club on the day of the former's death. They both recounted that Heywood had said he would trust Bill McGinnis "as a son," and they bore witness to the fact that in their long acquaintance with Heywood he had never been wrong in his judgment of men.

Following up the advantage the testimony of these witnesses had given him, Langdon began to work with more intensity. In rapid succession he called the woman whose car had been damaged in Morgan street some days before, several men who testified to the bad condition of the street, and a private detective who stated that he had examined the limousine owned by the late Mr. Heywood in which he was riding at the time of his death, and had found therein certain evidence which would be brought to the court-room later by one of his assistants. Leaving Starkweather to wonder what the new evidence could be, Langdon suddenly placed the defendant himself on the stand. Bill told the same story he had told before, in the same direct way.

Cross-examination by Starkweather brought out nothing new as to what happened on the night of the alleged crime, except that Bill now was free to admit that he had hidden the weapons he had taken from Griggs in his sister's garage after discovering that John Heywood was dead.

"Why did you do that, if you were not guilty?" demanded Starkweather.

"Because I had a record, and knew you hated me."

Before the district attorney relinquished

the witness Langdon thought of another question he wished to ask. When permission was granted for him to resume his direct examination he said:

"While you were driving Mr. Heywood that night, did you at any time strike a rut in Morgan street that almost caused you to lose control of the wheel?"

"Yes; I had almost reached the boulevard when the car struck a hole, and the wheel was knocked out of my hands. I barely managed to swing into the boulevard without hitting the billboard on that corner."

"That's all," said Langdon, and he called Joseph Harris.

"Mr. Harris, where were you on the afternoon of May 18"—giving the date of his ride through Morgan street with Joe—"and what occurred on that afternoon?"

"First, I went home through Morgan street, and there I saw the accident to an automobile that the lady told about a few minutes ago. That gave me an idea, and I telephoned you, and then we took a taxi and went down Broadway to Morgan street, through to the boulevard, and on to Mr. Heywood's house. While we were in Morgan street, you told the driver to go faster, and when he objected that it would break his springs, and was all-around dangerous, you told him you loved danger, and would pay for any damage."

"Did I tell him that?" laughed Langdon. "Then what?"

"He drove about thirty miles an hour, and I had to hold on to the seat because the road is so rough we were near jolted out of the car. You didn't seem to mind, though, because you just sat with your arms folded and let yourself get the worst of all the jolts. You had your hat off, and I saw it fall to the floor. Then we hit an awful bump, and I shut my eyes, thinking it was the end of us. The next I saw you were holding your head and one of your hands was covered with blood. You had been struck on the crown of the head by the iron bar that supports the top of the taxi. I noticed that it, too, was bloody.

"Then you told the driver to slow down, and we went on to Mr. Heywood's house."

"If the court pleases, I wish now to place another witness on the stand. Mr. Harris may be recalled later for cross-examination, if that seems necessary. If the prosecution will permit this slight irregularity we can probably conclude the case this afternoon."

After brief argument Langdon's request was granted, and the private detective with the new evidence again took the stand. In his hand he had a neatly wrapped package.

"Has the evidence you discovered in the Heywood limousine been delivered to you?" Langdon asked.

"Yes. Here it is." Langdon took the package and slowly untied the knots in the string that bound it. Every one in the court-room strained forward for a glimpse at its contents. At last Langdon dramatically held up a small, shiny piece of metal covered with patent leather, or a fabric imitation of leather.

"What is this?" asked Langdon.

"A small section of the supporting rod that helps to sustain the top of the Heywood limousine," answered the detective. "I cut it out after discovering that upon it are several stains of coagulated blood and a number of gray hairs. I have in my pocket a report from a certified bacteriologist which states that the blood in question is that of a human being. The hairs have been identified as similar in color and length to that of the late Mr. Heywood."

"Your Honor, I offer in evidence this section of the rod." Langdon handed it to the clerk. "And now, if the court pleases, I request a dismissal of the charge against the defendant for this reason: John Heywood met his death in a perfectly natural way, owing to natural happenings, while riding in his car through Morgan street. It has been set forth by competent witnesses that the street is dangerous. My own head, which you see bandaged, is a mute testimony that it is decidedly risky to drive fast through the street. The theory of the defense is that Mr. Heywood, a man of slender build, weighing less than one hundred and twenty pounds a week before his death—which, by the way, is fifty pounds less than my own weight—was so jolted from his seat, as the defendant followed his instruc-

tions and drove fast through the unpaved highway, that his hat was knocked from his head and his head struck the iron bar, here offered in evidence, with such force as to cause instant death. No other theory can explain the blood and hair which appears upon the bar in question, and which has been identified as human blood and hair.

"The case of the prosecution rests entirely upon circumstantial evidence of a very obvious kind. We have proven that Mr. Heywood trusted the defendant implicitly, and we have shown the good—nay, the exceptional—character of the defendant himself. We have explained, in a manner no reasonable man can doubt, how the defendant happened to have in his possession the weapons which were found in his sister's home. Not only, therefore, have we proven the unreliability of the prosecution's case at every point, but we have also established beyond possible doubt the actual facts involved in the death of Mr. Heywood. The defense moves, therefore, for an immediate dismissal of the charge."

Several times during the afternoon Langdon had startled his audience and his opponent by his abrupt and often erratic way of conducting his defense. This sudden attempt to clear his client entirely was so unexpected that even the prosecutor was unprepared for it. He rose with an effort, and attempted to marshal his logic and his array of facts. All he could think of for the moment was the appeal to the jury he had carefully prepared and rehearsed. If the indictment were quashed at this time he would have no chance to make that speech.

"I object!" he shouted. "I object!"

Langdon paused to listen to his opponent's objection. For a moment Starkweather did not speak. Then he said weakly:

"I believe the evidence in the case proves conclusively that the defendant, Bill McGinnis, killed John Heywood."

But there was none of his usual conviction in his tone or in his words.

"I don't believe the learned district attorney was listening to my reasons for making the motion," Langdon said sarcastically, smiling to the judge and the jury, and winning smiles in return. He knew then that his case was won. Not even the judge felt that Starkweather had a chance to convict McGinnis.

"Moreover, Your Honor," Langdon went on, "I make this motion not only because it is my duty to my client, but also because it is my duty as I conceive it towards my friend and benefactor, Mr. John Heywood. I know that it is what he would have me do. I took this case without even investigating the circumstances, because I was informed by the brother-in-law of my client that Mr. Heywood had willed the young man five thousand dollars. I knew Mr. Heywood too well to believe for one moment that he had so misjudged the character of a man he trusted. And you, who also knew him well, must feel as I do—that he did not make a mistake—and so will free this innocent defendant."

He sat down. There was utter silence for a moment, as Starkweather endeavored vainly to gather together his scattered logical structure. The court waited for him to speak, but when he did not, replied to the motion:

"According to the evidence presented to the court, it seems that the indictment as drawn against the defendant is false and untrue. Therefore, unless the people present good and sufficient reason for continuing the case, in the form of evidence more substantial than circumstantial, the court grants the motion for dismissal of counsel for the defense."

Starkweather still said nothing. He was beaten. Langdon looked at him calmly. At last the district attorney rose to his feet and assumed his usual dignity.

"The people have rested, and have no new evidence to offer," he admitted.

Bill was free—free to take Nora into his arms, to hold her there, and kiss her warm lips and look into her blue Irish eyes forever. It was only now, when it was all over, that she broke down and wept from sheer joy.

Joe left Bill in the arms of Mary and Nora and approached Langdon. There was

one thing that still troubled Joe. He couldn't have any peace until he had got that settled.

"Now about the fee, sir——" he began, as soon as Langdon turned away from his client.

"Fee? Don't bother me!" exclaimed Langdon. "You're always trying to pay me. The fee has been paid. And, anyway, you saved Bill. You're the lad who found the hole in the case, aren't you?"

"Nobody could have beaten Starkweather the way you did," Joe modestly replied. "I'm willing to pay anything I've got, anything at all, and I don't want to make you wait for it. I hate to owe debts."

"Come here a minute, Griggs!" called Langdon to the man whose pardon he had won. "Now, here's the fee I'm asking, Joe Harris. I want you and Bill, between you, to give Griggs here the thousand dollars he needs to get started. Bill can pay it all as soon as he gets what Mr. Heywood left him, but I want you to put it up now. Will you do that?"

"Of course, but I don't see where you get your——"

"Mine has already been paid. I'll tell you how. John Heywood sent me to college and made a lawyer out of me. He did it for a purpose. Before he died he told me why. He said he thought the most useful charity he could ever indulge in was to provide a lawyer for the people who needed one and couldn't afford it. So he set aside five thousand dollars a year for me to live on and started me out as his charity lawyer. I never take a case unless it's serious and unless the client is hard up. I'm working for Heywood, do you see, and he pays all the fees. Simple, isn't it? Now don't tell me you can't accept charity. I've done as much for John Heywood in this case as I have for Bill McGinnis."

Langdon gathered up his silk hat, which he placed jauntily over the snow-white bandage, hung his stick over his arm, drew on the bright yellow gloves, and prepared to depart.

"Say, mister," Griggs said as he started away, "I wanta thank you for what you've done for me. I don't see how you got that pardon, especially after I broke jail."

"Easy," laughed Langdon. "But don't tell anybody. You see, the Governor used to play poker, but now he's reformed. Still, a good gamble always attracts him. So when I told him what I had left to your conscience he agreed that there was a gambling chance, with an even break, that you would never show up. I offered to bet him a pardon that you would; he took me up and signed the pardon. If you hadn't been here I'd have burned it."

Before he left the court-room Langdon stopped by Bill and Nora. Bill held out his hand.

"Gee, I've been so busy kissin' Nora I almost forgot to thank you."

Langdon shook hands and turned to the girl.

"From the moment I saw you," he said, "I knew that a man with a girl like you could never be guilty. Don't forget my invitation to the wedding."

Near the door the lawyer was joined by a diminutive figure in brown.

"If you only had a monocle now," said his laughing secretary, Miss Brown, "you'd look like John Drew twenty years ago. May I walk beside such a toff as you?"

They strolled off together through the crowd that still lingered in the court-house, laughing, talking, dreaming.

"Do you really think I did it well?" asked the young lawyer, suddenly serious. Would Heywood approve if he had been there?"

"Yes, dear. It was altogether splendid."

He turned to the shining, sincere assurance of her eyes.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed. "Here it's five o'clock and I'm in morning clothes. I must change at once."

As they got into a taxi the girl laughed again.

"No wonder Joe Harris asked me, the first day he came in, if you were mentally sound. Sometimes you don't act it, but I'm trusting to Mr. Heywood's judgment. He picked you—and I guess I will, too."

The Kalong Kiss

By DOUGLAS M. DOLD

FERGUS COPEN, being owner of a detective magazine, was comparatively free. He needed a change, for he had been working hard on a puzzling criminal case, and I saw that his amateur detective avocation was getting too keen a hold of him. So I prevailed on him to join me on a fishing trip.

We started for Spooners Covex, at the end of a narrow-gauge railroad, and hired as guides Jean Grosjean and Charley Levert. We started up the river in the canoes.

About four the next afternoon we came to a beautiful little beach bordering a lake with a natural clearing, and here we pitched camp. This lake the guide said was about three-by-ten miles in size; that the other farther along was larger.

The connecting river between the two lakes was a brawling rock-strewn stream, the mouth of which could be seen a little below our camp, the shores woody, rocky and with occasional fairy beaches. Fergus was like a boy turned loose, and I felt pretty good myself. We'd already seen signs of fine sport, as the fish had been breaking all about us on the way down the lake.

Around the camp-fire at night the guides told us yarns of "the grand castle" of a seigneur buried in this region, in which lived a rich, powerful old man and his beautiful daughter. The old seigneur was "ver' strange," because he had every one searched before they came in his house.

Fergus remarked that he was glad that there were no "skirts" around the lake, and I told him that these guides always exaggerated frightfully. The girl they mentioned was probably as ugly as a mud fence, and lived in a hut with an old forester father—if the two existed at all.

He looked relieved.

Next day we started on an expedition to get some of those big blue jumpers whose existence I had heard of. We had shifted our camp to the edge of the river, just above a beautiful falls, and decided to fish separately. I was to work down from the falls and Fergus was to work up.

I fished hard; but the blue jumpers were distinguished by their absence, though I had both guides with me.

By mid-afternoon I had caught nothing, but was still fishing hard when I heard several shots coming from our camp, and rushed back, wondering what it meant.

A curious spectacle greeted me. There was Fergus, the woman hater, with the prettiest little article of femininity in his arms! She was unconscious, and her long, cloudy black hair was dripping. Fergus, also drenched, was waltzing around in circles, as though he had lost what sense he had, but he had managed to hold the girl and fire a pistol in the air.

When he saw me he fairly shouted:

"Thank God, you're here! You know about women. What'll I do with her?"

As he spoke he dropped the pistol.

"Put the girl on your bed, you idiot! She's stunned, probably full of water, and there's a cut on her head."

Instantly he carried her into the tent and laid her on the bed. I tried her pulse and found she was suffering more from shock than anything else. During my work I was getting the story by degrees from Fergus, who had become quite composed.

He had been casting in a pool just below a very bad bit of rapids, and had had better luck than I, for he had captured a small blue jumper. He was intently examining the fish when he heard a distant cry, and looked up just in time to see the

girl clutching frantically for her paddle, which had been wrenched from her hand.

Half-way down the chute the canoe hit something and capsized. The girl's head must have struck a rock, which stunned her. The canoe, he said, was stranded down the beach on the shallows. As she had swept by him he had dragged her out.

I turned and looked at the still unconscious girl. She looked to be between eighteen and twenty-one, with a small, lithe figure, small hands, beautifully shaped, her skin very white and untanned, her face oval, with small, delicately shaped mouth and straight nose.

"Fergus," I said, "who is she?"

Old Fergus is not given to gushing—just now he was in all kinds of a grouch, and rasped out:

"How in hades do I know?"

As though to answer for herself, the girl stirred and opened her eyes. They were slaty-blue and slightly turned up at the corners. As they had very large irises one got the effect of their being half closed. She stared anxiously, bewilderedly at me, and then sat up. Before she could speak I forced a little brandy between her lips. Then in an arresting, vibrant voice, which was low and clear, she stammered:

"Wh—what's all this? Where am I?"

At this point the guides arrived with a rush, having heard the shots, and bolted for the camp. As their eyes fell on the girl they drew back, and one of them said:

"Oh! Oh! Mam'zelle Elaine! Has mam'zelle, *donc,* been hurt? Oh, *donc est le grande seigneur—le pere de mam'zelle?"*

So she was the girl of whom the guides had spoken—the grand seigneur's daughter. Her manner bore this out as she haughtily told them she wasn't hurt; that her canoe had upset; and then she turned again to us. The guides promptly fell into humble silence, while the girl, instinctively turning to Fergus, got a recital of the circumstances out of him, and thanked him so prettily in sweet, old-fashioned English that he blushed deep red.

She hastily explained that she and her father lived not far from the upper lake, on which we hadn't yet fished; that they were often on this upper lake in their small launch fishing. Wishing to surprise her father with one of the purple jumpers, she had slipped away in her canoe while he was on shore.

Would we now help her back to her father, who must have discovered her absence, and might be worried?

Fergus and I took her along the rough river shore, the guides following with her canoe. As we came in sight of her launch, which was anchored some hundred feet from shore, she timidly asked if she might not know our names, adding that she was Elaine Battersea, daughter of an Englishman. I promptly explained who we were and then hailed the launch. A queer-looking figure appeared, pulled up anchor and started the motor. When he came within speaking distance he said:

"Glory be, Miss Elaine, your father's scared about ye. He's huntin' the woods for you, and begun the minute he came back an' missed you. He told me to wait here, and fire the gun if you come in."

With these words he picked up a large gun and let both barrels go. Battersea was near at hand, for on the heels of the shots we heard something that sounded like a moose coming. Battersea broke out of the forest—a huge, powerful man, with a crop of white hair and beard, his face tanned mahogany color. His dress made me think of Gladstone—frock coat, black tie, and so on. It certainly looked queer in these woods.

With a cry of relief he hurried to his daughter, asking about the cut on her head, and ignoring us.

She answered him hurriedly, explaining our part. At this he wheeled and gave us a piercing scrutiny from his fierce old eyes. Then, much as a king might have done, he thanked us and said we must visit him.

I could see that Fergus was thinking this picturesque old chap might suggest a magazine story, never dreaming that we were on the verge of a truth more gripping than fiction. We were both bitten with curiosity by this time, but pretended to think we should stay in camp. Battersea overruled them, and insisted that we accept his invitation;

then he suddenly added in a peculiar, halting way:

"But—I—forgot. There are a couple of questions——" and as we stared he shot at us: "Have either of you ever been on the Malay Peninsular?"

Amazed, we said "No." His eyes burning holes in us to see if we answered truthfully, he snapped:

"At least you know what a kalong is?"

Again we said our education in that particular had been neglected; we didn't know.

At this he became decent again, and said:

"A kalong is a fruit bat like the vampire bat I once encountered while on my travels. I'll have your things sent to my humble abode. Oh, I insist, my friends! You don't realize how much I owe you. At my house we'll talk fishing, and I'll show you some *real* fishing in a lake which has only giant chain pike."

By this time the guides came up with the canoe, both fairly servile in their deference to Battersea.

The first glimpse we had of Battersea's "humble abode" was the corner of a brick buttress not far from the other end of the lake. We found that the house itself was a huge stone mansion which looked like a castle, and must have been built at immense expense.

Battersea explained its appearance by saying that, being an Englishman, he wanted something which reminded him of home; that he had drawn the plans himself. I afterward found the place impregnable by anything short of artillery.

The building of native rock was beautifully located on a high mound, with cleared grounds and fields flanking it, the forest coming no nearer than half a mile in any direction.

Later, as we stood on the battlements (for the place had enough battlements and a portcullis, too, for that matter) we had a wonderful view. To the east, over the tops of the trees, we got a suggestion of the ocean.

The rooms of "Grey-keep" (which was its appropriate name) were very comfortable and modern, and were lighted by an acetylene plant. There was a piano, a victrola, and a library of many volumes. Most of the servants were Scotch Gillies, who talked a patois hard to understand. Mr. Battersea ruled the place in a patriarchal way. He was a fine man, but difficult to comprehend. We found him to be a cultured person and an Oxford graduate, but extremely reticent as to his past history. Why he was so far from home buried in the wilds he did not explain.

Even the name spelled mystery to me, and I could see that Fergus was still more affected by it. He does most of his brilliant detective work by what he calls intuitive imagination.

The girl added to the strange atmosphere of the house by her uncanny way of answering questions before one asked them. Both of us experienced this with her, and then she had an odd little way of really looking at you when you thought she was looking down. We didn't realize until too late that we were being keenly observed, and it worried us.

We had a royal time, but when our six weeks' holiday was over we had no desire to go home.

Mr. Battersea and Miss Elaine seemed equally sorry to have us depart. In our many intimate talks I had told them about Fergus's remarkable gift of solving mysteries. Mr. Battersea seemed much impressed. The night before we left he vaguely hinted that he and his daughter lived in exile not from choice. In closing he asked us to promise not to mention himself or his household to any one of the outside world.

On our way to the coast Fergus brooded continually over Grey-keep.

"We certainly had a ripping time," he said. "But, George, that is a mysterious place. Do you realize that that house is in a constant danger of siege?"

"Your imagination's bolting with you."

"Did you know that they actually raise and lower the portcullis and drawbridge every evening and morning?"

I stared.

"The devil! No. But that's just some English frill of good form."

Fergus shrugged his shoulders.

"You admitted yourself that the house seemed mysterious."

"While I was there it did."

"In all that library there is not one book pertaining to the East, the Orient. Yet you noticed what keen interest Battersea displayed in my account of the Tasmanian Devil case, which has entirely to do with the Orient. And those halting questions of his that first day about the Malay Peninsular and the kalong—what do you make of it?"

"That it was an Englishman trying to joke—always a pathetic performance."

Fergus shook his Byronic head.

"You're off. If you'd stop thinking about your own infernal affairs you'd realize that the man is living under some kind of cloud, fearing something sinister." He paused; then slapping one fist against the other, he added sharply:

"I believe we'll see more of those people, and it will be in a strange way when we do."

I paid little attention to his prophesies.

Seven months later Fergus burst in on me like a bombshell, hurling an envelope at me and saying excitedly:

"Read that, George! Didn't I tell you so?"

"For God's sake give me time to read it before I say whether you told me so or not!" I growled angrily, as I picked up the letter.

It ran:

"DEAR MR. FERGUS COPEN: Oh, my friend, come at once to Grey-keep. Something terrible is happening here. Father is ill, and there are such strange occurrences Who can I trust but you? Only come prepared for anything, and bring good old Mr. Griswold with you. In fear and hope,

"ELAINE BATTERSEA."

"*Good old Mr. Griswold!* By heck, this is too much! I ain't but two years older than you!"

Fergus snapped at me:

"Don't be a fool, man! Can you leave tonight? I'm taking a small laboratory, and all the 'impedimenta' I consider necessary. I've been counting on you, George."

I went.

Fergus and I caught the evening boat out and arrived at our destination at five next morning. When we were there before Grey-keep had been grimly happy, but *now* fear was plainly written everywhere. Even the cheerful snub-nosed, black-eyed English butler seemed to have a listening attitude of half-concealed dread.

Miss Elaine had written without her father's knowledge, but we could see that our coming was a pleasant surprise to him. We knew he was glad that she had done what his own stiff-necked pride prevented him from doing.

He greeted us heartily, and had our luggage sent for, but all the while we caught his sense of strained listening—smelling and sniffing for some odor which seemed a characteristic of the whole household.

Battersea, once a burly middle-aged giant, had now become a shrunken, stoop-shouldered old man, who constantly whirled around and looked behind him as if he heard or sensed some one following him.

As soon as he got a chance, Fergus pointed out to me that Battersea wore a peculiar high black collar, and that there was a fine grating over all the windows. I had no time to observe anything else, as Miss Elaine came in with a large spraying outfit.

Instantly she dropped it and greeted us with:

"Oh, I'm so glad you've come." There was something in her face so piteous and appealing that I forgave her outrageous remark about my age.

Dinner proved a silent meal, and it was not until Elaine had excused herself and we were smoking that Fergus made the break I expected.

"Mr. Battersea," he said frankly, in his most winning manner, "we are your friends, and have come here to help you. But in order to do so you must help us by telling us what is wrong. It's easy to see you're keeping something back—the something that is creating fear all through Grey-keep."

Mr. Battersea stared hard at Fergus, and puffed a while in silence, then he answered quietly:

"You are right. I'll tell you. Elaine knows little except that we are in danger, but I will call her in and let her hear my explanation, too. She is a brave girl; she should know just what I am going through."

When the girl entered he locked the door behind her, remarking that he wanted no intruders on his story.

After we had reseated ourselves, Elaine close to her father, he said to her gently:

"Little girl, I've just decided to tell all three of you a story that for years I've tried to forget. It's not a nice account, but God knows it's all true!"

"Proceed, sir," said Fergus.

"Forty odd years ago I was a poor young man with only my title and a few rocky acres in Scotland," began Battersea. "My name isn't Battersea, it's John Strath, Earl of Glennalpin."

Fergus cut in:

"Not the Earl of Glennalpin, supposedly wrecked in his yacht twenty years ago?"

The old man smiled.

"Yes, that supposed death was contrived and managed by my faithful butler Strifes, whom you have seen, the most loyal of servants. Seeing no opening at home, I got a berth as an assistant district commissioner to the Sunda States, in the Malay archipelago, with headquarters not far from Malacca. The work was not hard, and I had much leisure and little pay; therefore I was usually on a gold hunting or jewel hunting expedition in the interior, which is a wild place now, and was even wilder then. Gentlemen, God never made that country. I've seen things there that no white man ever ought to see!

"Two years after I arrived in Sunda I was sent on a punitive expedition with a few hundred constabulary into the hills to punish one of the Chattak tribes who had murdered an Englishman.

"A Shan tribesman I met on the way told me a curious story of a black race who were Brahmin by religion, and dwelt near a fabulously rich mine in the Hinterland, back of the Yabohalu mountains. He claimed they were all priests who dwelt in a huge monastery, but held the surrounding country in subjugation. He presented me with an enormous ruby, carved in the shape of a bat's body, with gold mesh wings.

"After the insurrection was stamped out, I got a long leave of absence, and with fifteen Mohammedan Dyaks started upcountry. After four weeks of steady progress we were reduced to twelve men, but had crossed the mountains and came into a plateau behind them.

"Here I first saw signs of the Jacimi influence. We comported ourselves as an ordinary hunting party, acting in a friendly way toward the few natives that we came across. In their villages we did our 'dekkos' regularly, entering the pagodas most respectively for that purpose.

"We asked our way to the monastery or 'doyoga,' as they called it, where dwelt their 'Great Rulers.' Invariably we were told it was still several days' march north.

"One day we began to notice peculiar signs. For instance, heretofore we had been allowed to go all over the pagodas. They had a secret shrine in them which we were not allowed to enter, and which was protected by a curtain on which was emblazoned a grotesque representation of some kind of a flying nightmare.

"On the second day we reached the shores of a very large lake, probably about seven or eight miles in width at that point. Here we made camp, hoping that the morning would fetch some one over to us in a boat. And, sure enough, quite early there appeared a flotilla made up of their peculiarly carved canoes with high prows and sterns.

"In the foremost sat a very different individual from the other occupants and paddlers. I recognized him at once from the description the Shan had given me as one of the true Jacimi priests, and he bore out the Shan's declaration that only the blackest ones were allowed to be priests.

"He advanced in a slow, solemn way. His clothes were a vivid oriole yellow, and below his throat, spread out on his chest, was a realistic presentation of the nightmarish, bat-like thing I had seen on the pagoda curtains. But this time it was done in green and black. His features were regular, with scarcely a trace of the negroid, his head was

shaved bald and his teeth yellow from chewing Beetle-nuts.

"He spoke in measured, sonorous tones, asking who we were and where from. I replied that we were hunting and traveling, and that having heard of the greatness of the Jacimi we would, if permitted, abide a while in amity with them.

"He answered in a courteous affirmative, and asked me to step into the boat, saying that my followers and luggage would be attended to. Arriving at the opposite shore of the lake, which they called 'Kish,' we disembarked.

"The town itself was negligible; but the doyoga, or holy buildings, were truly remarkable. A huge T-shaped building faced the lake and backed up against a tremendous cliff, and was built of light gray rock with a flat granite roof. A remarkable feature of the building was the myriads of little windows set, not in rows, but in every possible place, in and out of line; it seemed there were no regular floors.

"Over each window was a yellow object which, to my horror, proved to be a human skull, with some of the cervical vertebræ left on, and bent in a most grotesque way. Over the main entrance was the most hideously carved bat-like creature with green and black membranous wings, having great claws at the tips. The body was venomously green. The head was set at an angle, its large, round ears and small, wicked, jewel-like eyes giving it a Satanic touch. I stopped to gaze at this devilish-looking thing. The priest smiled grimly at me and made an obeisance to it, which included pointing his hand at his own throat.

"My friends, I could go on at great length, but it is enough to say that we were treated kindly and stayed with them for months. I wormed gradually from the Doy that their rubies and gold, of which they seemed to have an inexhaustible supply, were found together in what they called a cleft, really a valley with a concealed entrance, which was entered some way back of their monastery. It was here that they bred and trained their inexpressibly horrible kalongs. These typified their diety. God, I've seen the sacrifices of them, have had to stand by and watch them at the throats of their bound and helpless victims. It's hard to talk of it, but the oozy squeal of those hideous vampires, clinging to some wretched sacrifice, dying a living death, makes me shudder yet. But the priests loved the slobbering, squealing kalongs, loved the green spume from their mouths, loved the smell of them. The smell! Ugh! That smell was like marigolds, for the kalongs lived in a sort of marigold pasture, many being kept in gold mesh cages, ready for their ghastly duties at the altar.

"Enough of this. I need only say that at last I was taken into the concealed valley and trusted with its secret. They took my assurance that I cared nothing for the gold and jewels, but much for their friendship.

"When I thought the opportunity came, I took four of my men and slipped unseen into the valley four times, each time carrying out and secreting a vast store of gold and rubies. All would have gone well but for one of my men. He grew careless and disturbed the kalong's lair. They attacked us viciously, and we had to kill a score of them. In our excitement we failed to hear the approach of their attendant priests; and they attacked us more viciously than the kalongs had done. We had to kill these priests; it was our only chance.

"We got away with most of the treasure, and a month later I staggered into Josula, on the Gulf of Siam, with only one of my original party, losing him the day I arrived. By slow marches I got back to Malacca with my jewels and gold. Slowly I made my way back to England, and thence to Glennalpin. There, Elaine, I found your mother waiting, and married her; but not until I had told her frankly my story. She said she still wished to marry me. Elaine, darling, are you going to be a harder judge than she?"

Elaine gave a little cry of remorse and kissed him passionately.

"Oh, Daddy, all I want now is your safety. Don't think I have criticised."

"Then it's all right, dear. Let me go on. For a short time my wife and I lived very happily. Then out of a sinister sky things began to happen. The smell of rotting

humus and marigolds came into the clean Scotch air. The kalong curse had found me out; the hands of living priests were stretched across the sea. Even to kill one kalong was a sacrilege. And I—I had done it.

"Three days after you were born, Elaine, your mother was killed. There were two punctures in her neck, and only *I* knew what they were, and I didn't dare explain that she had died of what the priests in the doyoga called the 'Kalong Kiss.' I was a madman in those days. If it hadn't been for my faithful butler, Strifes, God knows what I would have done. He suggested the drowning idea, and got us to Quebec under another name.

"For a year I found safety there. Then one day I smelled marigolds, and came to the conclusion that my only chance was to go to the wilderness, where I could build an impregnable keep. I bought this section of the peninsular, and have passed through twenty years of evil expectancy."

He paused. The dying fire had lapsed into a few dim coals. I was vaguely aware that the acetylene lights in the dining-room were not burning well, that the place was dimmer than it should be.

Fegus's voice was quietly saying:

"Mr. Battersea, I think you've escaped danger these twenty years because they covered a period of mental torture the priests decided to put you through."

Battersea looked at him haggardly.

"You express just what I have thought myself. And now—now, gentlemen, the stink of the marigolds is in my nostrils again. And I'm turning helplessly to you—to you, whom I frankly confess I suspected were enemies at our first meeting."

"Very naturally," Fergus said. "But as you trust us now, it's all right. As to the marigold smell, was that why you had the spraying machine, Miss Elaine?"

"Yes—that's why," she said in a broken little voice. "You see——"

Her sentence broke off. She was realizing, as were the rest of us, the growing dimness of the room. Suddenly the lights went out altogether, and the red of the coals was worth nothing in the ensuing blackness.

Before we could speak I saw a shadowy yellow shape moving in the air at the other end of the room. Quietly it began swinging, growing luminous, until it clearly revealed the yellowed shape of a skull with seven cervical certebræ attached, the latter bent on themselves at a grotesque angle.

Instantly I thought of Battersea's description of the doyoga ornaments. The hair on my head began bristling as the yellowed skull, streaming its pale, horrible light, vibrated to and fro like a ghastly pendulum, as Time ticking off poor Battersea's last hours of safety.

Then came from the thing a slow, menacing voice. In some outlandish tongue I heard three words. The last was "kalongsy"—punctured by a slobbering, oozy squeal, as though we had been swept into those fearful temples of which Battersea had told. Those sounds out of that lipless, tongueless mouth paralyzed me.

But Fergus was on the job. Back of the horror went his quick imagination like an arrow. I heard him snatch at the thing. Something rattled, then all was silent. Fergus yelled to me to open the windows and turn on the lights.

I got the windows open, but Fergus was ahead of me on the lights. He struck a match and tried a gas-jet. It flared up reassuringly. Under his left arm he carried the skull. It had a short chain attached.

In a corner Elaine was bending over her father, who was lying on the floor breathing stertorously. Fergus called sharply to me:

"Help her get that black steel collar off him. The kalongs must have been trained to go for the throats of sacrifices, and he wears it for that reason. It's choking him."

Somehow I got the thing off and gave him a little brandy. He soon revived, and Fergus, who had been waiting impatiently, exclaimed:

"Please translate what the skull said!"

Battersea stared, looked at the skull under Fergus's arm, and answered feebly:

"Take that thing out of my sight."

Fergus wrapped it in one of the big monogrammed dinner napkins, and with it still under his arm demanded insistently:

"What did the skull say?"

In wobbly tones Battersea whispered:

"Those three words meant *'We of the kalong remember and repay.'*"

"Thanks," said Fergus in a most business-like way. Then he cheerfully turned to Elaine and remarked:

"Of course you realize that there was nothing supernatural about this affair. If you will allow me, I will show you one of the most damnably ingenious little devices you ever saw."

His matter-of-fact tones gave her courage.

"In this skull," he went on, pointing to it, "which evidently isn't Anglo-Saxon, you will notice a little hook, with a chain attachment where the parietal juncture occurs. The skull is so articulated that the entire occiput comes off. Inside—see—is a very small but perfect phonograph which, together with an electric battery, furnish all the horror. Your china-closet back there, Miss Elaine, was just what the trickster needed. The skull was concealed beneath the curtains, which could be easily drawn, and fitted in a small trap in the roof of the cupboard. Had I not jumped quickly it would have been snatched away and we might have fancied we saw a sweet little apparition."

His laughing tones made us feel normal again, and Battersea now wanted to call Strifes in and find out if any new servant had been brought into the house. But Fergus, setting the skull down, emphatically declared that this would jeopardize his work of exposing the trickster, and that Mr. Battersea must let him manage things his own way or he would have nothing more to do with the affair.

He was so much in earnest about it that Mr. Battersea gave in and told Fergus to do as he wished.

Turning to me, Fergus said:

"George, it's mighty queer how this phonograph, made in Paris, concealed in a skull from the Malay Archipelago, ever arrived in this Avalon peninsular. See, down here in the lower table of the skull, under the phonograph, is some rotted marigold plus whatever else they have mixed in. Now I'll take charge of this little trophy, and we'll pass the matter on to the servants, even to Strifes, and then I'll decide on our course of action."

Battersea said mechanically:

"Very well."

"Mr. Battersea," said Fergus, "I think you'd best not sleep alone tonight. Not that I expect any immediate danger, but as a precautionary measure. We'll have Strifes, whom you trust, Miss Elaine and George to take the night in watches. Strifes can watch alone when his turn comes. I'll be engaged on other investigations."

From eleven to one Strifes watched, and nothing happened. Then Miss Elaine and I took our turn together.

After I had given Battersea a mild opiate he fell asleep.

The room was a huge chamber, with windows all along one wall. By the two dim lights burning I observed how simply it was furnished, just a couple of pictures on the wall, of his wife and daughter, a few chairs, rather low and loungy, and the exceptionally big-legged steel single bed on which Battersea was sleeping.

Elaine was half-reclining in a chair on one side of the bed, and I occupied a similar position on the other. We did not dare to even whisper for fear of waking Battersea.

Tired of the dragging moments, I picked up a copy of *"Quo Vadis?"* and was turning the pages when I began to feel an unusual sensation. The room seemed to be lengthening; I was growing smaller; the lights were increasing in number. I shot a glance at Elaine, who was trying to rise, but could only writhe. Something new and deadly in the air seemed to be holding us down. I tried frantically to get up, to call out, but seemed paralyzed.

Very quietly a curious thing happened. The end of the bed on which Mr. Battersea's head was lying slowly rose from the floor until he seemed almost standing; his head was quite five feet from the floor, his eyes wide open, staring at something at the other end of the room.

If ever I saw terror depicted it was on

his face. I managed to shift my eyes toward whatever was holding his glance. There stood a black priest in robes, and behind him were some terrible kalongs.

The priest was dressed in oriole yellow. Behind him, in the air, several of the kalongs hung in arrested flight. Whether they were real I did not know, but they seemed a section from a deadly nightmare. Yet I saw the creature move in the black priest's hand as he pointed toward Mr. Battersea.

"Loose it, but spare Elaine," gasped the former earl in a fearful, gurgling voice.

As though in answer the priest, with a slow, solemn gesture, partly hurled and partly tossed the monstrous vampire straight at Mr. Battersea.

It flew blunderingly yet directly for his throat, and settled under his chin. I heard an oozy, sucking sound, intermingled with squeaks and squeals. God! it makes me sick now to think of it.

Fergus leaped straight through what I had taken to be the kalong's lair. With one strong blow he knocked the priest senseless and sprang over his body toward Mr. Battersea. With one single swish of the cane he carried he struck the loathsome attacker to the floor, where it writhed and died.

I staggered over to the window and lifted it. Fergus joined me and seized Elaine, whom he laid over the sill, where she lay gasping, but coming to herself.

Fergus's next action was a peculiar one; he hurried from one gas-jet to another of those not lighted and seemingly turned them all on.

Then Fergus and I worked over the invisible wires that supported the bed, and after a few seconds let it down to a normal position.

"Elaine—is she safe?" were Battersea's first words on his return to consciousness.

He started to rise, but Fergus held him down, saying that he must lie still until the punctures in his neck could be cauterized.

Battersea submitted to this, only saying that it was wasted time; the fangs carried a deadly poison and he would not live till morning.

Until now we did not realize that the dead kalong had triumphed. The loot of the valley, the destruction of the kalongs, the enforced killing of the guardian priests, all this was avenged on the man who was breathing miserably on the bed.

As we hesitated about our next move, the yellow-robed figure on the floor stirred and got up. We both rushed at him, but he made no effort to get back at us, seeming only to try to collect his faculties. Then from this black-faced, priest-robed figure came steadily the typically English voice of Strifes, the butler. The voice was flat, yet expressed dammed-up emotion.

"Oh, master, I had to do it. You caused the downfall of the Jacimi by the deaths of the kalongs when you looted our treasures. To me the vengeance was entrusted, chiefly because I am not a priest, but one of the light-skinned Jacimi, lived in England, and could pass for a tanned Englishman. It was I who planned it all. Yet I learned to love you, and came to grieve that in the service of his people a man must put aside all personal feelings. I shall go into the night with you. Look!"—lifting his chin, he touched two big punctures in his own throat—"I set the kalong kiss there of my own free will."

Battersea had raised himself on one elbow, and was staring at the man. Now he said feebly:

"Will Elaine be safe with my death?"

Strifes merely nodded his head, for both he and Battersea had become cynactic. Their hands and feet were twitching in a strange, horrible way, and in the midst of Fergus and I trying to relieve them they died almost simultaneously.

Elaine fainted, and after we had carried her to her room and given her an opiate she slept.

After a careful examination we found that a painting had been let down from the wall and a huge panel had been noiselessly rolled away. Behind this panel was a dark passage. Fergus said the house was honeycombed with passages that Battersea knew nothing about; these he had found in dogging Strifes, whom he suspected all the time.

"What of the paralysis Elaine and I felt?" I asked.

"Must have been heavy, hanging gas. You see, the drugging was planned. Battersea's bed was high. You and Elaine, being on low chairs, were first affected, as Strifes wished. Its action was like curarine and may be a volatile toxin, which is small quantities paralyzes the muscles but leaves the senses intact. He had an installation containing gas-forming apparatus in the passage. This I guessed was connected with the gas-fixtures, except the two which were lighted. Those charged fixtures were so changed that when seemingly turned off they were really turned on."

"So that's why you seemed to be turning them on when—— I say, Fergus, let's have a look at that devil-thing you knocked with your cane."

Calmly Fergus picked it up. It was about three feet six inches from wing to wing; the wings were membranous like ordinary chiroptera; the thumbs were well developed and spurred; the body large, resembling the order frugivora; the ears were large, protruberant; the eyes small, jetty; even in death they looked vicious. The mouth looked to my unscientific eyes like an elephant's trunk cut off close to the mouth; it had a soft, sucked-like appearance extremely repulsive.

Fergus shuddered as he said:

"A fiendish organism, George; probably innocuous originally in its functions, but in case of training has become one of the most venomous of all animals."

"But the venom?" I asked.

"You will probably find on analysis that it was serpent venom placed on its fangs."

"Fergus," I grumbled, "you were never cut out for a magazine owner. You should have been a poor man and kept in the detective ranks. But, of course, I am glad that what you call your intuitive imagination has been behind poor Elaine in all this. We'll take her back to New York, and set things as straight as we can for her."

And that was exactly what we did, only that Fergus did his part of setting things straight by marrying Elaine. But it was no more than I expected.

A DASH FOR LIBERTY

WHILE bullets from two guard towers hailed down upon them, four prisoners escaped over the north wall of the Kansas State Penitentiary recently.

A fifth convict, Charles Kavanaugh, essaying his second escape from the institution, was shot down from the wall and captured.

It was the second jail delivery within days, thirteen prisoners having escaped from the institution on December 2.

The prisoners, who made the successful dash for liberty, in the most daring break in the history of the prison, are Walter Geary, Brizzille Pratt, John Stitzel and Cleon Richerson.

The five convicts released themselves from their cells by some unknown means and attacked the inmate officer in the east cell wing, Alec E. Smith, a life termer and trusty. Smith was stabbed and dangerously wounded.

The prisoners then went to the prison engineer room, where they overpowered the officer in charge, threw off the switch controlling the electric light system and plunged the entire prison in darkness. Making their way to the power plant the convicts held up the officer there, obtained a ladder and scaled the north wall.

Officers in the two guard towers commanding the wall opened fire. Four of the men went over, but Kavanaugh hurtled off the wall with a bullet hole through his leg.

In the previous escape thirteen convicts crawled through a forgotten tunnel under the prison wall. Four of them were captured and returned to the penitentiary.

Whispering Eyes

By ERNEST A. PHILLIPS

JOHN DUNCAN, chief of detectives, threw himself into his swivel-chair and, after tilting back to a dangerous angle, hurled his clumsy feet upon his desk and fastened his eyes upon the countenance of Ed Eads, the pride of his staff.

"Ed," started Duncan in his slow, drawling fashion, "Blackjack Gallagher is back in town."

"Not George Gallagher, Chief!" almost shouted Eads, his eyes popping in their sockets.

His chief nodded.

"Yes," he explained somewhat slowly, "Blackjack's out—and he's back here again."

Eads, his rat-like eyes staring blankly before him, shook his head slowly. "I thought we were rid of him. Let's see—yes, his time is up. He got eight years for that Stanfield murder, didn't he?"

Chief Duncan, sucking his teeth, as he often did while in deep study, answered that he had. Then he said:

"That means work for you, Ed. You got him once—caught him dead to rights on the scene—and I guess it's up to you to watch him now. He's your man, Ed."

Eads swelled with pride at the words. Such compliments always appealed to his egotism. He was heart and soul in his particular line of work. His was the mind of a super-detective; his memory carried faces of innumerable criminals; jotted down there on his mental blackboard were the features, the scars, the fingerprints even, of hundreds of criminals. Just a single glance at a set of odd fingerprints, or the mug of some criminal received at the bureau of identification, was sufficient to draw upon that mental blackboard of his the designs he would never forget—that he could recognize upon first sight.

"Have you—has he started his dirty work here yet, Chief?" pried Detective Eads cautiously, hoping to learn, if he could, how his chief had discovered Blackjack Gallagher's presence in the city.

In reply Chief Duncan pulled open a little drawer in his desk and extracted a forged check.

"Take a look at this, Ed, and see for yourself," was all he said as he handed the other the check.

Shaking his head convincingly, Eads muttered:

"It's his work; but I wonder how he came to slip it over on a wholesale drug house."

Chief Duncan again sucked his lips.

"It's your case, Ed."

Putting his badly crushed hat upon his head, Eads got to his feet and started to leave the private office of his chief.

"Just a minute, Ed," came the words. "Here's something else you might look into, if you get time."

Wondering, Detective Eads took a clipping from a morning newspaper and read in astonishment:

EX-CONVICT'S GRAVE ENTERED BY GHOULS

Shortly after twelve last night attendants at the Mountainview Cemetery were surprised to discover that the grave of Paul Carson, notorious criminal, buried there less than a week ago, had been opened by unknown persons. Upon investigation it was found that the right hand had been removed from the body. It was severed at the wrist.

"What do you make of that, Ed?" questioned the chief.

Detective Eads was slow in replying:

"Worth looking into, and might lead up

to something big. First case of its kind I ever heard of."

With those parting words he left the chief's office and slouched through the corridor, where a string of fellow plainclothesmen, waiting for their daily assignments and to make reports on cases they had been working on, eyed him suspiciously.

"He's got something under way," whispered Jim Barnes. "Any time he pulls his hat down like that and slouches he's smelling the wind."

John Less, another detective, nodded and said:

"He's lucky—always gets the big assignments. Look at me. Been here five years now, and all I get is to run down petty thefts at the pawnshops."

At that moment Chief Duncan stepped out of his private office and the members of his staff, standing in line, became silent.

Falling into a limping stride, and favoring his left ankle just enough to attract attention, Detective Eads, as he limped up South Sixth street, was thinking, hard and deeply, seriously and soundly. Blackjack Gallagher—as Eads remembered him he had a hard countenance. There were deep wrinkles about his eyes; his brows were a dark black that were conspicuous, to say the least; his forehead was smooth, but rather heavily wrinkled, especially above the nose, where two frowning wrinkles prevailed that he could never forget. And now, eight years later—well, those wrinkles would be there and, if anything, they would be deeper, easier to recognize.

As he rounded South Sixth and Edmond streets the detective felt a slight tap on his back. He paused to glance around, finding Marvin Ingersoll, police reporter of *The Sun*, grinning at him.

"What's in the wind, Ed?" inquired the police reporter.

The detective smiled grimly.

"Honest, Marvin, I couldn't tell you right now. Might have something for you later—at least I hope so."

The explanation was sufficient for Ingersoll. He had known Detective Eads for several years, had worked with him on innumerable cases, and, best of all, knew he had the inside track on anything that would break on his time at Central Station.

"See you later, Ed—and good luck," ventured the reporter as he continued on his way.

Eads limped on down the street. "Fine lad, that Ingersoll," he mused. "Knows how to write a story, and knows how to give a man credit for what he does. Different from those other reporter fellows—they think only of getting the story; they never worry about mentioning our names and giving us credit for the work we do or the chances we take."

Fifteen minutes later found the detective entering the business offices of Scott & Kemple, Wholesale Drug Company. Approaching C. H. Kemple, president of the firm, whom he knew on sight, Eads pulled out the forged check, and after shaking the other's hand, began: "Who took this check, Kemple?"

The drug dealer pressed an electric button under the edge of his desk. His secretary - stenographer entered the room promptly.

"Find Miss Emily Bowman and bring her in, Miss Burdett, if you please."

The detective seated himself, drumming his fingers on the edge of his hat-brim while he waited.

In a few moments the woman who had accepted the forged check was in their midst.

"Do you remember the man who gave you this check?" asked Eads.

The woman blushed a little, and seemed embarrassed.

"I—I—well, yes, in a way. He was smooth-faced, and had a lump or something on his forehead, just above the nose. There were lots of fine little wrinkles about his eyes, and, as I remember now, he had a gold tooth in his upper jaw. I—I couldn't say how he was dressed, but he wore a hat."

The detective took in the words without interrupting. He was surprised.

"Guess Gallagher has got a partner working with him," he thought; for he was sure that the handwriting was that of Blackjack;

he was, in fact, as sure of that as he had ever been of anything.

"Humph!" was all he said. "Do you recall what purchases he made, lady?"

The woman rattled the end of a pencil between her teeth.

"No, but I can easily find the sales-sheet."

Returning a few moments later, she handed him a carbon copy of the sales-sheet, and, as he glanced through the list Eads frowned at the puzzle.

"That's all, I believe; but if you don't care, I'll just keep this little ticket," he said to President Kemple.

"Go right ahead. We've already checked up the sales in that department, and the ticket is no good, anyway," came the reply, following which the baffled detective put on his hat and slouched out of the office to the street.

"Humph!" he mumbled. "Bump on his forehead. Smooth-faced. But, by all that is green and purple, it's Gallagher's own writing!"

And then, permitting a peculiar twist to form upon his thin lips, he smiled at the situation. Going to the nearest police telephone box, he called Chief Duncan.

After an aggravating wait, he was rewarded by hearing his superior speaking at the other end of the wire.

"It's Eads, Chief. Any of the men spotted Blackjack yet?"

"Neither plainclothes dicks nor uniformed men have noticed him yet," came the reply, and both men hung up automatically. Detective Eads snorted as he limped away from the police box.

Entering a combination cigar store and billiard hall to purchase a cigar, he pointed to his favorite brand through the glass case just as a shouting newsboy dashed into the place.

"Extra! Extra! All about the big murder! Extra!"

Forgetting his limp, pocketing his cigars with anxious fingers, Eads whirled about. As he did so he noticed a man who had been standing near a billiard table rush forward, rummaging nervously through his pockets.

"Here you are, son. Give me a paper," cried the man excitedly, and he took a paper, giving the boy a coin. "Keep the change; that's all right," he jumbled, glancing hurriedly at the bold headlines.

The detective watched the boy pocket half a dollar as he purchased a paper, and he grew numb as he read, in glaring type, that less than an hour ago a murder had been committed in the very block he had been working. Dropping into a vacant chair, he read the few meager lines published, his mind whirling.

Charley Amberton, a jewelry merchant of prominence and fortune, had been stabbed to death in his office. Jewels, the report said, valued at thousands of dollars were missing. Detective Ed Eads glanced hurriedly at the remaining lines of the story. "The police were informed of the murder just as *The Banner* was going to press for its early edition. The murder had been accidentally discovered by Marvin Ingersoll, a reporter, who entered the Amberton jewelry store, where he found its owner and proprietor sitting in his swivel chair, with two fatal wounds in the left chest," was the last that he read.

Stuffing the paper in his pocket and forgetting his limp, Eads started toward the building in which the crime had been committed.

Just as he stepped out of the door somebody brushed past him and he remembered the man who had so nervously purchased the extra. In the flash of a second the man was gone, lost in the swirling crowd, and memory of him was wiped out as the detective squirmed through the swirling mass already gathering on the next block.

Doctor Timmerman, coroner, reached the scene as Eads arrived. They greeted each other with nods, then closed the doors behind them as plainclothes-men and uniformed policemen fought the curious crowd back and tried in vain to scatter it.

"The body hasn't been touched yet, Ed," informed the coroner. "If you want to conduct an examination, go right ahead, and do it before I conduct an autopsy that might spoil your fingerprint work."

Eads was soon at work. The silver paper-knife that Amberton had been stabbed

with lay on the floor covered with thick, half-dried blood. Upon examination, numerous fingerprints were visible. The detective gently laid it to one side. Upon the desk were other prints, some that showed a struggle had occurred. An overturned waste-basket further indicated a fight.

Doctor Timmerman bent over the dead man, and after pressing the two holes that showed in the chest, he said:

"He never knew what killed him. The first stab pierced his heart, and he was dead before the second jab was made."

But Eads hardly heard. Instead, after sprinkling a little white dust over the visible prints on the desk, and after comparing what he took from there with the ones he took off the paper-knife, he uttered an exclamation that bewildered Timmerman.

"What is it, Ed?" the coroner cried. "Have you recognized the murderer?"

Before the detective realized what he was saying, he shouted: "These are the fingerprints of Paul Carson, the dead crook!"

At that instant Marvin Ingersoll entered the office where the dead body lay and the two men were at work. He caught the words of the detective.

"What?" he demanded. "Paul Carson! Why, he's been dead and buried a week!" And then the dazed reporter added; "But wait! Wasn't his grave entered last night? Sure!"

Realizing the news value of the information he had so quickly obtained, and knowing he had a clean scoop on the details so far, Ingersoll dashed to the telephone across the room and hurriedly called his editorial office, rattling off the latest and most startling developments of the crime.

That over, he stood silent, watching his friend at work still comparing the fingerprints. At last Eads looked up, shaking his head slowly.

"That's right. No mistake," he said. "For I could remember the prints of Paul Carson a thousand years, if I lived that long. Come here. Look at the little wart there on the inside edge of the thumb."

Both the coroner and the reporter looked at the prints through a little magnifying-glass and saw the peculiar lines formed about the little wart he mentioned.

When they looked up, questioningly, Detective Eads met them with a direct stare.

"The most baffling mystery of them all—forged fingerprints," he mumbled

Then the detective questioned Marvin Ingersoll, who had discovered the murdered body. The reporter told his story briefly. He said he had entered the establishment to have a little chat with Amberton, in an effort to obtain a feature story about a high-priced ruby the jeweler had recently purchased. Upon entering the store he asked one of the clerks if Amberton was in. "He's in his office there," the clerk replied. Ingersoll entered, only to find the sagging body of the jeweler heaped up in the chair.

"At first I thought he was asleep," said the reporter. "I called him, nudged him—and saw the blood on his vest and coat. Then I knew he was dead—had been murdered."

Detective Eads listened closely and sharply.

Ingersoll continued:

"I knew I had a good story, Ed, so I called the plant from here, told the re-write man the story, and just waited here about fifteen minutes before going out again; for I wanted to beat the other papers out with the story. It was a dirty trick to play on you, Ed, but—well, it'll mean a raise in pay for me, scooping even the police"

"Humph! It ought to, for you sure beat us to the story. Why, less than ten minutes before your papers came out I was talking with the chief—and he hadn't heard of it yet," was all the detective had to say. He got the last word out of his mouth just as Chief Duncan and three plainclothesmen entered.

Duncan took one look at the crumpled body of Amberton. "Suicide or murder?" he asked of his detective.

"Murder, and a bad one at that, Chief," came the dry reply. "Look at these prints here and see if you recognize them."

Chief Duncan scanned the fingerprints the detective had taken.

"They're Carson's prints!" he almost yelled, looking up quickly.

As they stood there they balanced the murder from all sides of the human ledger. Motive, robbery, for a chest of highly valued and rare jewels that Amberton always kept in his private office was missing. Method of the crime, stabbing through the heart with a silver paper-knife. Manner of entrance of the murderer, through the main salesroom. Manner of escape of the murderer, a mystery as yet. Detective Eads called Ingersoll to one side.

"Which clerk told you Amberton was in his office?" he demanded.

Ingersoll went out into the main salesroom, where three horrified clerks stared at them frantically.

"That's the one," said Ingersoll, pointing to the thin little man wearing shell-rimmed glasses behind the counter on the left.

Detective Eads approached him.

"Do you remember when Ingersoll came in here this morning?"

The clerk nodded.

"About ten-ten. I remember, because I was looking at my watch just as he asked me if Amberton was in."

"Do you remember anybody entering Amberton's office before Ingersoll came in?"

"No, sir. I do not think anybody visited Mr. Amberton before Mr. Ingersoll came in."

The detective snorted.

"Think hard. Somebody must have entered—either that, or one of the clerks stabbed him to death," shot back the detective.

By this time the other clerks had gathered about them.

"No, Mr. Chesterfield is right, sir," spoke up one of them. "Nobody, aside from Ingersoll, visited him this morning."

Detective Eads whirled around.

"Are you certain of that?"

"Absolutely certain, sir." And from the firmness of his words the detective knew he was speaking the truth.

Without a word he walked back into the office, and there, at sight of an open window leading out upon a fire-escape, he found the answer. And so that problem was solved.

Manner of escape of the murderer, through fire-escape window leading into a rear alley. Clues to work on, the forged fingerprints of Paul Carson, a dead criminal, who had been buried a week before, but whose grave had been opened the night before the murder had been committed.

Glancing at the results of his balance, Detective Eads realized that to solve the crime he must learn who entered the dead criminal's grave and sawed off Paul Carson's right hand, and why it was done.

As the dead man's body, covered with a sheet, was placed into a gloomy straw basket and carried out to the ambulance the crowd gradually broke up, but comment on the murder was on every tongue in the business district. The murder of Charley Amberton was mourned by the entire business community.

"Who do you want to work with you, Ed?" snapped the chief of detectives.

"Nobody," came the quick reply. "I think I can solve this murder within five hours."

Marvin Ingersoll jerked out his watch. It was eleven o'clock now. If his detective friend could unravel the mystery within five hours, it would mean that he could have the story in time for the first mail editions for the country subscribers and for the final street edition of the day.

"I'm going to work with you, Ed," he ventured, and when no return was forthcoming he knew his answer.

"You heard what I said," growled Eads to the chief.

"Well, if you can, it'll mean a great boost for the department; but if you get stuck and need help, phone in, and I'll give you every available man," were the parting words of the chief as he departed.

The detective left the jeweler's office, and was followed into the rear alley by Marvin Ingersoll, who looked on as Eads examined the rusty fire-escape that passed Amberton's private office.

As he stood there gazing in silence at the rusty fire-escape structure, something flashed into the detective's mind—a bump on his forehead; thin wrinkles about his eyes. The detective started. The man who had purchased the newspaper there in the

billiard hall! Reaching into his inside pocket, he pulled out the sales slip he had obtained at the wholesale drug house.

Through narrowed eyes he glanced through the list of purchases again—paraffin wax, hypodermic needle, rubber hood, small trimming knife. Eads shoved the sales ticket back into his pocket and started briskly out of the alley toward the street.

He violently cursed himself for being so stupid. He should have watched that man and trailed him; but to have a murder committed right in the very block he was working on, without knowing of it until he read it in the newspapers, had proved too much for him. But on that mental blackboard in the back of his brain he had jotted down a description of that man who bought the extra. And he knew he would recognize him if he ever caught sight of him again.

"Here, Ingersoll, take a look at the handwriting on the check and see if you can remember it. See how he dots the i's? Remember that peculiar swerve in his s's. You go to the Francis Street Hotel, and the Robidoux, and I'll make the Elms and National. See if anybody who has registered writes like that," instructed the detective.

The two parted, one hopeful, the other counting the minutes as they flew by, his mind set on the five-hour limit.

At the Robidoux the reporter scanned the names of those registered during the past week in anxiety, frowning at his failure to locate a signature corresponding with the writing he had seen on the forged check.

In was with despondency that Ingersoll trudged three blocks over to the Francis Street Hotel, there to again meet with disappointment in his quest.

Looking at the names a second time to make certain he had not overlooked a resemblance to the forged check writing, he started toward the Elms Hotel, where he was to meet Detective Eads.

As he entered the clerk eyed him suspiciously.

"Has Eads been in here yet?" he asked.

The clerk grunted.

"He's up in room 409."

With his heart pounding, Ingersoll bounded to the elevator, leaving a scowling clerk behind him. The clerk, a son of the hotel proprietor, knew that the presence of a detective and a newspaper reporter spelled unfavorable publicity, especially when the two cornered a guest of the hotel in his room.

As he raced down the corridor to room 409 Ingersoll paused before the door. He could hear voices within.

"So you still maintain you're not Blackjack Gallagher, eh?" Detective Eads was sneering.

"Never heard of such a man or name in my life," came a tantalizing reply.

"You lie!."

A scuffle of feet followed. The bed rocked. Ingersoll forced his way into the room just in time to see the detective snapping a pair of handcuffs about a man's wrists.

"Guess you'll hold yourself in check now," taunted the detective.

No reply was made.

"Stand up here. I want to frisk you."

The handcuffed man, his face a deep red, and with a bump on his forehead showing conspicuously, now that his hat was off, got to his feet rather reluctantly.

"You can't search me without a warrant!" he blazed in anger.

Detective Eads chuckled.

"Just wait and see."

Then he went through his pockets. From one he pulled forth odds and ends of paper; from an inside coat pocket he extracted a red printed card of no value; from an upper vest pocket he pulled out a little folded slip of tissue-paper, which, when unfolded, proved to be a receipt for a registered package at the postoffice.

Ingersoll, scanning the receipt over the detective's shoulder, lifted his eyes in time to catch the scowl that spread on the prisoner's face.

The detective simply said:

"Call the postoffice and tell them to hold up a package mailed and registered by one A. G. Anderson, addressed to C. M. Comstock, at Chicago. Tell them I'll be over to

inspect it shortly, with the postoffice inspector."

While Ingersoll was carrying out instructions the detective continued to chide the man before him.

"Thought that bump on your forehead and the way you fixed your eyes would cover you up, eh? By the way," sneered the detective, "what did you do with Carson's hand after you got through with it?"

He watched the prisoner's eyes sharply, and when a momentary flash of surprise sprinkled in them the detective knew in an instant he had solved the crime.

The Blackjack Gallagher who stood before him now was different from the Blackjack Gallagher he had sent to the big house eight years before—yet he was one and the same.

"I'm afraid the jury'll give you life for this job, Blackjack," said the detective. "Man slaughter in the second degree was the best we could stick you with last trip, but this—ah, what's this?" He pulled a little thin package from the man's inner vest pocket. Gallagher made a futile effort to regain possession of the little package, but his handcuffed hands held him helpless.

The package was carefully unwrapped, and when Eads held before him the dried but blood-stained skin of a perfect man's hand Marvin Ingersoll gasped in amazement.

"Is that—that Carson's hand?" he questioned chokingly.

The detective smiled.

"How about it, Blackjack?" But Gallagher had nothing to say; the dull, damp gloom of a prison cell loomed before his eyes.

Detective Ed Eads smiled from ear to ear.

"Where is that hypodermic needle you bought yesterday?" he barked. No reply. Whereupon the detective said to Ingersoll:

"Break open that handbag there and let's see what's in it. Our friend here, Blackjack Gallagher, was going to take the one o'clock train out for Chicago, and I guess we'll find the rest of the evidence in his grip."

Upon opening the handbag several neatly wrapped packages were found, and when they had been unwrapped the detective smiled knowingly.

"Still say you're not Blackjack Gallagher, eh? Well, call the station and ask Chief Duncan to send up the wagon. Tell him we've got our man."

Blackjack Gallagher, snarling like a cornered wolf, attempted another break. Whipping his revolver out of its holster, the detective struck him a smart blow upon the head; the prisoner wilted and fell senseless.

With all details clear in his mind, Marvin Ingersoll wrote his story amazingly, clearly, and in record time. It was a clean scoop, a clean beat; and he knew he would be out on the street with his story at least a half-hour ahead of his competitors. And as he reached the end of his story he paused for several seconds, thinking. When he finally finished his report, Detective Ed Eads had received the finest compliment and praise of his life.

Down at Central Station, with Chief Duncan listening closely, and with the revived Blackjack Gallagher staring blankly before him into the horror of life imprisonment, if not the death penalty, Eads explained the capture of the murderer.

"It looked hard at first, but proved simple once I got to work on the case," he stated. "You see, I knew it was his handwriting on the check, but when the woman who sold him the goods described him, I thought it was something different. At first I thought maybe he had a partner who had cashed the check after he had written it. That lump on the forehead and those thin wrinkles around his eyes had me guessing.

"But when I looked over the list of purchases, why"—he paused to smile modestly—"then things commenced to form. He bought the paraffin wax and a large hypodermic needle. Those two things spelled one step toward the end. He melted the wax, Chief, filled his needle with it, then injected it into the skin below the eyes while it was still warm. That filled up the hollow spots beneath his eyes and at the same time caused those deep wrin-

kles to disappear, leaving only little thin ones.

"Then, to make his camouflage more complete, he injected another needleful of the warm wax into his forehead, just above the nose. By sitting with his head drooping until the wax cooled off, it left a lump on his forehead above the nose, at the same time filling those two big wrinkles that had been above the top of his nose.

"Women use that treatment when they commence to wrinkle about the eyes, to retain a young appearance in the face. I noticed him first when I bought extras containing news of the crime. It just happened that we were both in the same place when a newsboy entered.

"Just as I started to buy one Gallagher stepped up and got one, giving the boy a half-dollar and telling him to keep the change. He was nervous; wasn't you, Blackjack? If you had waited for your change or even part of it, I never would have looked at your face; but when I got a glimpse of your sweating forehead, well—that was the beginning of the end. I knew you were the Blackjack of old, but I didn't know who the Gallagher of today was.

"I should have shadowed you then, watched your movements. But I was so badly shocked to learn a murder had been committed right beneath my nose that I couldn't see straight.

"But when I found those prints of Carson, and when I compared the purchase of two medical instruments you made at the drug house, then I could begin to see light. I knew then all I had to do was to run you down. And there was but one way to do it——"

He stopped as a knock sounded on the door. At a given command Detective Gardner entered, handing the chief a box.

"Postal inspector says it's all right," said the detective, turning and walking out.

The box was opened and in it were found the Amberton jewels.

Blackjack Gallagher snarled grimly at sight of them, and Eads proceeded:

"My only chance to trace him then was to find what hotel he had registered at, if at any. I found his signature at the Elms. He had registered as A. G. Anderson, but the "s" in the name gave him away. I knew it to be the same "s" that appeared in the forged check. The clerk gave needed information to clinch the search.

"The rest was easy. He put up a good play at first but began to weaken, and when I asked him what made him so yellow under the eyes, he was at a loss for a reply. I knew then I had my man, Chief—and here he is.

"When I found the skin off Carson's hand in his inner vest pocket the case was closed, as far as I was concerned. You see, he had opened Carson's grave, sawed off the right hand and carried it back to his hotel. The body had been embalmed just long enough to begin to get tough. By delicate carving he was able to trim the skin off the embalmed hand in such manner that it gave him a glove to pull on over his own hand. By killing Amberton with his right hand, he was able to leave the fingerprints of Carson as evidence.

"At that, Chief, if he hadn't doped those whispering eyes of his and if he hadn't acted so nervous as he did when he purchased that extra, and if he hadn't forged that check here, and if he hadn't purchased his instruments here, and if he hadn't——"

"Yeh, an' if I hadn't turned the trick I'd still be a free man," cut in Gallagher.

"You admit it, then?" jammed in Chief Duncan.

Blackjack grunted in disgust.

"What else can I do?"

"Tell me this," cut in Detective Eads. "How did you enter Amberton's office?"

The prisoner smiled grimly. "I jumped in."

"Then you didn't use the fire escape?"

"No, I said I jumped in—just like this," and before either Chief Duncan or Detective Ed Eads realized what had happened, Blackjack Gallagher sprang from his chair and fairly leaped across the room in one fierce, seemingly impossible jump. There followed a smashing of glass, a splintering of wooden frame-work and Blackjack Gallagher fell four stories below. He was dead from a broken neck before anybody could reach his side.

The Barstow Case

By J. WERNER PHELPS

CHAPTER ONE

INSPECTOR GREENE smiled. "Just tell me the facts, Sayre," he invited, as he laid down his pen.

The young man leaned forward eagerly.

"Well, I admit, Fred, I've read a good deal of this psychology stuff—it hadn't made any special impression, though. But last night, just at dusk, I sat smoking. I was alone in the apartment, and wasn't asleep, for I still held my pipe. Suddenly I heard a woman cry out. It wasn't a scream—just a frightened cry—then a name which sounded like 'Bernard.' I sat bolt upright, and there, against a dark portiere, seemed to stand a girl—a very young girl—with big, frightened eyes and, I could not help noticing, great masses of glinting, red-gold hair. But even as I looked the figure faded. I turned on all the lights and searched the apartment, but found no one."

The inspector glanced at his young friend sharply.

"Of course, Gene, I don't go in for this psychology nor ghost stuff; the criminals I come in contact with are mighty material. I've heard of such things—believe there is something in mind transference—and what you tell sounds interesting. Of course it was imagination, though. Are you sure you never saw the girl in real life?"

"Positively. I have never seen a girl even resembling her."

"How was she dressed?"

Sayre laughed.

"I don't know as visions are ever dressed—that is, particularly—and all I noticed were her slender form, eyes and wonderful hair."

Greene sat musing for a moment, then rose, picked from the top of his desk a number of photographs, selected one and laid it face up on the shelf of his desk.

Sayre leaned forward in awed silence for a moment.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed excitedly. "If the eyes were open in fright and the hair loosened, I am sure this would be the very face. Who the devil is she?"

"Ever hear of Ethel Barstow?"

"Never. What's she haunting me for?"

Greene laughed heartily.

"Guess her apparition got shifted somehow. Her mind transference didn't register properly. You sat back—*en rapport*, as they say—and got a mental reflection meant for some one else."

Sayre did not join in the laugh.

"Seriously, Greene, who is she?"

"Guess you've been reading sub-conscious stuff lately instead of the news. Well, then, Ethel Barstow, a very attractive little stenographer, a girl of high moral character, yesterday morning kissed her mother, as was her habit, started for work—and disappeared."

Sayre sat up straight.

"She did? Well, go on?"

"Not much more to tell. I've put my best men on the case." He waved his arm in a gesture eloquent of failure.

The younger man gazed long at the photo.

"I don't know how I ring in on this. But that girl's face, with a great appeal, appeared, or I imagined I saw her, and, by Jove! I'd like to help find her. You know, Fred, that I have more time and money than occupation, so I might stumble onto something. I'm no detective, although, now that I recall it, they used to call me 'The Sleuth' at college. Said I could smell out solutions. Haven't thought of that in years. I remember once——" and Sayre's rather

boyish face lit up with a reminiscent smile. "However," he went on hastily, "here I am with several cars and a chauffeur at our disposal, and all the time in the world. Let me go to the rescue of this 'damsel in distress.'"

Greene looked thoughtful.

"Well," he said after a pause, "I am a bit shorthanded. If you're serious I'll put you on with Hilton." He pushed a button and a detective entered. "Hilton," added Greene, "meet Mr. Sayre; you two are to find Miss Barstow."

Sayre and the young man who entered shook hands with the warmth which denotes an immediate mutual liking. Hilton was a fair-haired, rough-hewn young giant, whom one instinctively felt had rubbed against all the corners of life; while Sayre, some ten years older, with his lazy body and grace of manners, showed more familiarity with upper Fifth Avenue.

The inspector stood frowning a moment.

"Bernard, Bernard," he repeated. "That's the name your ghost-girl called." He took down a heavy book and began turning the pages. Presently he laid the volume down and, with a stubby finger, followed the list of "B's," repeating the names aloud—"Bernard, Jim, alias 'The Dink.' Bernard, Cal.; Bernard, John, alias 'Evans,' alias 'The Dope'; Bernard, alias 'Slippery,' alias 'Bernardo'——"

"Wait a moment," Sayre interrupted. "It wasn't 'Bernard.' That's it—it was 'Bernardo,' she said."

Greene closed the book and turned.

"If you are sure of that it's our first clew. I had no reason to connect Bernardo with this case. Did you find out anything further, Hilton?"

"Only this, Chief, the girl in the candy store on the corner of her street says Miss Barstow purchased a stamp there yesterday morning. There were no other customers, and she stepped to the window to admire Miss Barstow's dress. Miss Barstow walked to the curb. As she reached it a taxi stopped in front of her. An old woman leaned from it, spoke to the girl, and she stepped in."

"Sharp work," said Greene. "And the taxi driver?"

"I traced him. He picked up a garrulous old woman at the Waldorf. She told him to drive uptown, through Morningside avenue. At One Hundredth street she rapped sharply on the glass and told him to head toward Central Park. At a corner she gave the signal to stop. She spoke to a girl standing at the curb. The girl got in, and he drove them to a house on East Sixty-fifth street. The house is boarded up. The caretaker convinced me that no one called there. Another car must have picked them up."

"Or the driver lied," put in Greene. "However, it's your case now. It won't hurt to have Bernardo shadowed. Call me up on any new developments." Then he turned to his desk.

Sayre and Hilton agreed to meet at lunch. Two hours later, over their cigars and coffee, Sayre was telling Hilton of his vision.

"There's something back of this case," Hilton remarked. "Ransom is out of the question, as Miss Barstow is the sole support of her widowed mother. She is only eighteen and very pretty. She had no men friends."

"Her employer?" hinted Sayre.

"Up to a week ago she was employed as under-secretary to the president of the Hardwick Steel Products Company. Had worked there almost a year. Her work was done entirely under the supervision of the secretary, a woman who has been in their employ fifteen years. Miss Bloom says Miss Barstow seemed above her position—a girl of great refinement and sweetness. I did learn this, however: there was something the girl was mortally afraid of. I can't trace this fear, as she made no confidant. Mr. Hardwick, a fine old gentleman, scarcely remembers the girl, as she seldom took his dictation direct; but the employees speak most highly of her character."

"You said 'up to a week ago'; did she leave Hardwick's?"

"This fear that I speak of seemed to be affecting her health. She became very nervous, and resigned a week ago."

"And since then?"

"She left her home at the same hour every

morning, but spent her time trying to find another position. Her mother was astonished when told that she had left Hardwick's."

Sayre sat back and blew rings of smoke into the air. With half-closed eyes he watched them break and fade.

"Who is this 'Bernardo'?" he asked presently.

"Bernardo—or 'Slippery,' as he is called—is one of the slickest, smoothest criminals in New York. For a price he will do anything. Has been indicted a dozen times, but, somehow, has escaped serving very much time. I put a good man on his trail."

Sayre, finishing his smoke, frowned several times. At last he looked up.

"Hilton," he spoke slowly, "you're a detective. If I had to make my living I would probably have been one, too. But my bump is not one of deduction or elimination. I just got a 'hunch,' and my present hunch is that Hardwick is interested."

Hilton laughed outright.

"Hardwick? Never! He's above suspicion. Scarcely knows the girl. Eliminate him, Sayre."

"That's just it, I can't. Every time I force my mind on some one else I think of him."

More telepathy or mind-transference?"

"I don't know; just can't get away from it."

Hilton suggested that they call on Mrs. Barstow, and it was here that Sayre got a big surprise. A niece who was staying with the almost prostrated mother ushered them into a neat sitting-room. The young man glanced around, and suddenly Sayre picked up a framed photo from a table at his elbow.

"Is this Mrs. Barstow?" he asked.

Hilton nodded.

"Why, I know this lady; that is, she looks awfully familiar." He studied the smiling face of the picture, then looked up with an odd expression. "Funny," he began, but just then the original came in.

In spite of her trouble, Mrs. Barstow did not look her thirty-eight years. She was tall and slender. Quantities of reddish-gold hair seemed almost too heavy for her rather baby type of face. Her eyes, with a fearful question in their depths, glanced from Hilton to Sayre, then a wave of color flooded her wan cheeks.

"Gene—Mr. Sayre," she gasped in startled tones.

Sayre stepped quickly forward and took her outstretched hands, then turned.

"Hilton," he cried, "I thought that photo looked familiar. Why, Mrs. Barstow, as Irene Lyons, was my boyhood and college sweetheart. I lost track of her when she went West."

The momentary light died out of Irene Barstow's eyes.

"Gene," she said piteously, "help me find my little girl. Only last night I was thinking how wonderful you used to be at solving mysteries, and I was just wishing with all my heart that you were here to help and——"

Sayre turned and slapped Hilton on the shoulder.

"My vision, Hilton. You see that she had me definitely in mind, wishing 'with all her heart' that I was helping her, and off somewhere her little girl was calling for help. I got the psychological call."

Irene listened eagerly as he told of his peculiar experience, then shuddered and covered her eyes with her hands.

"I don't want to appear weak," she murmured brokenly, "but we loved each other as few daughters and mothers do. I was never well, and since my husband's death she took delight in taking his place as a protector."

She paused.

"Irene"—Sayre's voice had all the confidence of unbounded determination—"Irene, we are going to find Ethel. I have a theory of my own about it all, and I do not think harm has come to her. Just tell us frankly about her—her friends, her temperament, everything."

But the "everything" was not enlightening. They learned nothing new. Even the fear Ethel was laboring under was well concealed from her mother. This same desire to save her mother from worry was frankly stated by Mrs. Barstow to be the reason Ethel did not tell her of being out of em-

ployment. She had never heard of Bernardo.

Late that night Hilton dropped into Sayre's bachelor quarters. Sayre, in smoking-jacket and slippers, was pacing the library, a tray of cigarette ends testifying to the state of his nerves. He waved Hilton to a chair.

"Every moment is precious," he groaned, as he dropped into a chair opposite. "I can't bear to think of that little girl in the hands of unscrupulous men. What's new?"

"Not much, Sayre. Greene has respect for your hunches and has installed a man in the Hardwick house—second butler, I believe. He's to telephone here tonight of any developments—or to Greene, if he can't get you. Hardwick's mansion is not far from Sixty-fifth street."

Sayre jumped up.

"Perhaps——" he began excitedly.

Hilton lighted a cigarette.

"Don't be afraid of that. If she's in his house, our man would have known it before this. Hardwick will be watched from within the house and from without. Our part now is to lie low until some one makes a move. Bernardo is lounging back of Dennin's saloon on the Bowery, but is being watched closely. There's your phone now."

Sayre sprang to the instrument. It was Mrs. Barstow. She could not sleep, and had called up for a word of hope. Sayre reassured her more heartily than he felt, promised to call her on the least new development, then dropped back on his chair.

"I prowled up around Hardwick's myself this afternoon, Hilton," he said. "I conveniently had some motor trouble just in front, and got a good look at Hardwick, his personal secretary and his chauffeur. Saw your outside man follow them. It surely seems ridiculous to connect that fine-appearing old man with deviltry, and yet——"

Again the phone rang. Hilton saw Sayre's face register excitement as he exclaimed:

"Hilton, take this down, quick, as I repeat it. Yes, yes, I'm ready," and he repeated as the voice over the line spoke: "One, two, dash, one, two, five, dash, o, dash, v, dash, e, dash, r, dash, four, three, seven, dash, two, six, nine, dash, two, dash, six, four, nine, dash, one, three, five. That's all? Thanks! Good-by."

They both stared at the paper on which were the mystic figures as Hilton had put them down:

1 - 2 — 1 - 2 - 5 — o - v - e - r — 4 - 3
7 — 2 - 6 - 9 - — 2 — 6 - 4 - 9 — 1 - 3 - 5

"Hardwick's confidential secretary, Meade, telephoned that message half an hour ago. Jones slipped out to tell us. He didn't catch the party called," explained Sayre, and he read the message aloud.

"A code, of course." Hilton leaned over the table muttering: "One, two, A, B, space, 'one, two, five—A, B, E—no sense there."

Sayre did not speak; he sat with his forehead resting on his clenched hand. He concentrated all his mind on the figures. His frown deepened. The seconds ticked into long minutes. Suddenly he looked at his watch. It was 11.30.

"Hilton," he said, " 'one, two,' could mean '12.' " Hilton looked up quickly. "And 'one, two, five,' could be 'One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street'; 'o-v-e-r', could mean something like 'ferry.' "

They were both on their feet now, and Sayre was getting into his coat. He kicked off his slippers and only half-laced his shoes. Then he thrust the paper in his pocket as they ran toward the elevator. On the street they hailed the first taxi. Uptown, across One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street they dashed. At the ferry they found the usual theatre crowd of suburbanites. In the taxi they had puzzled unsuccessfully over the rest of the message. Sayre stood watching the autos pass the gates, and Hilton examined the waiting-room and boat. No one looked the least suspicious. He passed along the gangway of the ferryboat, glancing deliberately into each car. Neither Hardwick, Bernardo, nor the girl were there.

As he rejoined Sayre the gong sounded for the gates to close. At that moment a big gray sedan glided up and passed through the gates even as they were closing. The gates clashed, and then Sayre sprang for

them, calling out in dismay, for the number on the rear of the sedan was 437-269!

CHAPTER TWO

THE gate-tender glared, pointed significantly to the passenger-entrance, then turned indifferently away; but before they could reach the inner door the ferryboat had moved out on the Hudson.

"Ass!" whispered Sayre. "We had them, Hilton, and they got away. Of course, the rest of the message is plain: Change from a car with one number to another, and, boob that I am, I sat gazing at that car yesterday. It is one of Hardwick's cars. What now?"

"Get your chauffeur. Have him bring your car here at once. I'll call Greene. He may have heard something. We'll take the next boat."

Two dejected young men went to the telephone-booth in the ferry-house. After giving his chauffeur some orders, Sayre took up the telephone receiver again. In a moment Mrs. Barstow's trembling voice answered him.

"Irene"—he tried to make his voice cheerful—"I just wanted you to know that I am on the job. I am at the Fort Lee Ferry. We are going to follow a clue into Jersey. We may need you to look out for your daughter. Please join us here."

The chief did not call them the names Hilton rather expected he would. That was not his way.

"Buck up, boys," his genial voice vibrated over the line. "You are sure on the right track. Jones just reported that Hardwick must have left the house earlier in the evening through the garage. Anyway, he is not in the house. But I'll wager he did not get past Johnson. The slick Bernardo gave our man the slip, too. You say the car went on the ferry? Well, Hardwick has a camp in the Catskills. That's your destination. I'll send Beatty to you; he knows the place. Be sure you're armed. Good luck."

Five minutes before the next ferryboat left the slip three cars dashed up a good deal faster than the law permits. The first was Sayre's low-slung speedy little car; from the second jumped Beatty, and from the taxi stepped a woman. She thrust a bill into the driver's hand, then hurried toward the little group of men.

"Mr. Sayre, I am glad I had to come. My little girl, alone, may need me."

With a nod of understanding, Sayre helped her into the tonneau of his car. Hilton sprang in beside her. Sayre took the chauffeur's place and motioned Beatty to sit beside him. Then the hunt was on.

The sedan had a good start, but Sayre gave his car full opportunity to show off its power, and they only slowed down a trifle as they passed through the sleeping towns.

The night was very dark. Long before they reached the hills a gentle rain blurred the windshield. Professional pride kept Detectives Beatty and Hilton tense with the excitement of the chase. Sayre, his eyes straining on the unfamiliar road, found his thoughts drifting to the huddled little woman behind him. He felt her grief—her unhappiness. Then pictures flitted through his mind—pictures of college promenades, little luncheons in the city and moonlight evenings in a canoe on the Charles, when Irene had slipped away from Wellesley and he from Harvard. Now her little girl was in trouble. He pressed the car to new records of speed, as, under Beatty's direction, he made the numerous turns.

Miles slipped away beneath them; over hills, into valleys, they sped, along interminable roads that, in the darkness, seemed just alike.

"Watch for a ruined barn along here; we turn off the main road just beyond," called Beatty.

Silently they all peered into the darkness. Minutes that seemed like hours passed with the wet trees, and then the old barn was before them.

They made the turn and, under Hilton's direction, left the car at some distance from the pile of greater gloom which Beatty believed to be Hardwick's rather overgrown camp.

As they stepped cautiously forward their hands suddenly dropped to their hips, and

Sayre instinctively stepped in front of Irene. "What was that, Hilton?" he whispered.

But the answer came in a second movement from a clump of bushes as a dark figure detached itself.

"All right, Hilton, it's Johnson," it said in a low voice. "Thought you were the second bunch of crooks. Hardwick reached here, alone, hours ago."

Hilton glanced over the darkened house.

Sayre spoke a bit impatiently:

"Of course you are boss here, Hilton, but I'm for attacking the house. The old rascal isn't going to hoodwink us. The girl's in there, I'm sure."

"That's exactly what we're going to find out." Hilton's voice, while low, rang out sharply on the chilly air. "Beatty, you go to the rear, and fire in the air if any one tries to leave the place. Johnson, guard the front and flanks. Sayre, you and the lady come with me."

After the third summons the heavy oak door slowly opened and revealed Hardwick holding a candle, looking a bit grotesque in a bathrobe and bare feet. Behind him they glimpsed the white face of an elderly woman.

Hilton pushed in.

"What is this intrusion for?" fumed Hardwick, his hand shaking so in fear or anger that the candlelight set weird shadows dancing about the big, comfortably furnished room.

"Your little game is up, Hardwick," began Hilton. "You had better produce Ethel Barstow, the girl who disappeared."

Sayre, watching closely, noted a look of astonishment flash into the old man's face.

"Gentlemen"—said he with an effort at self-control—"gentlemen, you are at liberty to search my house."

Sayre, who had been so sure of finding Ethel here, stepped forward.

"By gad, Hardwick," he muttered between his set teeth, "we'll find the girl wherever you have hidden her."

Hardwick returned his angry gaze.

"I know nothing of the girl," he flashed. "I come here whenever the mood seizes me, day or night. My housekeeper there can vouch that I am alone."

But Sayre would not even glance toward the old woman. His hunch was still on him.

Hardwick turned his back, laid a log on the remains of a fire in the big stone fireplace, and deliberately raked the embers into a glow.

As Hilton turned to begin a search the telephone bell rang sharply. Hardwick shrugged his shoulders. Hilton picked up the receiver.

"Hello," he called. "New York? All right." There was a pause, and then they all watched Detective Hilton's expressive face as he took the message.

"Hold on, wait a minute, hold the line," he called as he turned, the receiver in his hand. "Hardwick, this call is for you. One of your servants says your house has been stripped—the safe rifled——"

Hardwick's face turned ghastly. He jumped up and snatched the receiver from the detective's hand.

"Yes, yes!" he screamed into the phone, and there was no acting about him now. "Who is it? Billings? What happened?" Then, after a pause spent in jumping from one bare foot to the other, "What the—you say?" He clamped the receiver on the hook and turned, his face working convulsively. "I have been robbed of some fifty thousand dollars' worth of Liberty bonds and cash. A clean sweep." He slumped suddenly into a chair.

Detective Hilton and Sayre, confronted by this new mystery, gazed at each other blankly.

"Your hunch has cracked, Sayre. Mr. Hardwick, I guess we owe you an apology. It was your secreatry, Meade, whom Miss Barstow feared. He has kidnapped the girl and robbed you."

Hardwick, who sat gazing into space, his face graying into deep lines, was suddenly galvanized into action.

"I'll have my car around. We'll go back at once!" he snapped as he pressed a button.

Sayre took command.

"Get dressed, Hardwick. We start in ten minutes."

"Where?" asked Hilton, as Hardwick stumbled out of the room.

"We must begin over again—at least from this side of the ferry. Meade won't come here with the money and the girl."

They were all on the steps when Hardwick's car, *not* the gray one Sayre noted at the ferry, backed out of the garage.

Mrs. Barstow, standing close to Sayre, was trembling violently. Her hope of finding Ethel this night was completely blasted. Sayre, pitying her suppressed emotion, turned to the others.

"All of you pile into the big car. Mrs. Barstow and I will follow in mine."

The big car snorted down the gravel drive. With the passing of the head-lights the world suddenly became a black, wet cavern. Irene, in terror, held out her hand, and Sayre grasped it as they hurried along the drive.

By the time they had reached Sayre's car the road before them lay perfectly black, still and empty.

The car glided along almost silently, took the first turn and presently passed the ruined barn; but soon they came to a cross-road. Sayre slowed down and flashed his search-light for a sign-post. There was none. Tracks on the ground showed that a car had recently gone either way, so there was nothing to do but make a guess. In the extreme blackness no landmark would look familiar. If there were houses near the road, none were lighted. On the way up Sayre had made turnings, almost mechanically, under Beatty's direction. However, he felt sure of the general direction and speeded up. A half-hour later Irene spoke:

"We should have reached a town long ago. Are you sure you know the way?"

The road seemed narrowing; wet branches slapped at the car as they passed.

"I won't fool you, Irene," he answered; "I am afraid we are lost."

The woman stifled a sob, then said bravely:

"Keep on going, Gene; we must come out somewhere. It can't be far from daylight."

Sayre pressed her hand for a moment. Instinctively she sat closer to him as they sped on through the night.

Sayre was mentally furious. He felt he had played a pretty small part in the whole proceedings, and it was well he did not say aloud the vindictives he called himself.

He knew the little woman beside him was heartbroken. He felt her terror, her shrinking from the awful thoughts that multiplied her fears about her daughter's danger. Tears splashed on her hands, but she bravely held her head high. A great pity and a great admiration for her courage made Sayre's throat tighter.

"God!" he groaned the prayer in his helpless rage. "If I could only do something!"

But he was lost in the foolish hills; precious hours were being wasted and the blackness of despair absorbed him.

Although it seemed darker than ever, an ambitious bird suddenly trilled its matin, and then the coarse clarion of a rooster split the silence. Sayre knew it was the darkness that precedes the dawn. Still they drove on in silence.

Slowly the light came—a shadowy light that seemed to creep about the woods, silhouetting the trees and showing the long vista stretching down before them. And then into the misty shadows along the road flashed the light of another car—a big car—Sayre noted as it came toward them up the hill—a big enclosed car that seemed part of the gloom. The road was very narrow; one of them must turn out to let the other pass. Sayre courteously turned the wheel; then, his eyes glued to the mud-spattered number plate on the other car, an oath escaped him, and he suddenly wheeled directly across the path of the big car. It was 437-269!

As the other automobile came to a jarring stop, just touching his car, Sayre was out, a revolver in his hand. There was a weird cry on his lips, a cry that voiced the transition of his spirit from despair to the heights of excitement.

"Get out of that car, Meade!" he yelled, covering the driver.

The man's face turned pasty. If he intended to reply he certainly did not have the opportunity, for Sayre was at him like a wild animal, and he found himself pulled into the muddy road.

"Now," went on Sayre, as he jabbed the

end of his gun into the other's ribs, "you stay there! I want to see your passenger."

Mrs. Barstow was already at the door of the big gray car. She did not even hear Sayre's sudden warning that there might be danger as she wrenched open the door. In the farther corner, gagged and bound, lay Ethel Barstow. Her mother's fingers somehow removed the gag and scarfs that tied the girl's hands and feet, and as the limp and hysterical Ethel crept into her mother's arms Sayre closed the door.

On his face was an expression not good to look upon.

"You hound!" he muttered as, gun deliberately pointing, he removed a pair of handcuffs from his pocket and advanced on the secretary.

Meade, who stood in an attitude of beaten humility, but with half-closed eyes, watching closely for his chance, meekly held out his hands, but the moment Sayre lowered his glance Meade knocked the gun up, had his own gun out, and fired.

Sayre felt the sting of the ball on his left shoulder, but returned the shot almost immediately.

Meade crumpled. Sayre bent over him.

"Where's the fifty thousand?" he snapped.

Genuine astonishment showed in the whitening face of the severely wounded Meade.

"How did you know we got the fifty thousand?" he gasped. Then he faltered: "I was only going to blackmail Hardwick when I got the girl to his camp. But we got lost." Meade tried to rise. "I wasn't going to harm the girl, only frighten her into marrying me," he whimpered. "I loved her."

"Innocent caveman stuff," snarled Sayre. "And Bernardo?"

"Bernardo, an old pal of mine, dressed up as an old woman, got her and held her until he got the phone message in cipher to transfer her to this car."

"Have you got Hardwick's money?" Sayre persisted.

The wounded man weakly shook his head, then suddenly collapsed.

"No, Slippery has it. He was to meet me here and split, but the sneak never showed up."

And at the same moment, back of a certain saloon in Weehawken, Bernardo, alias Slippery, laughed aloud at his own little joke as he sorted out fifty thousand dollars in cash and Liberty bonds and make a beeline for a West-bound train.

LONG PRISON SENTENCES

FOUR men who participated in different crimes recently were given long prison sentences in General Sessions the other day. Judge Mancuso sentenced William Axelrod, 31 years old, of 544 Bedford avenue, Brooklyn, to Sing Sing for burglary for three to ten years and simultaneously issued a bench warrant to be served on Axelrod by the warden when he has completed his term. He will then be tried for participation in the robbery of a show case containing $3,800 in jewels from the Ritz Carlton Hotel, New York City, on October 8.

Judge Koenig sentenced Salvatori Magna, 19 years old, of 402 East Forty-eighth street, and William Timers, same age, of 327 East Forty-eighth street, to Sing Sing for from five to ten years. They were found guilty of holding up Percy C. Lee, a taxi driver, at Avenue B and Third street, and robbing him of $43 and his cab. The youths were captured after a running pistol battle.

William Jacobson, 32 years old, a carpenter of 2471 University avenue, was sentenced to from ten to twenty years for burglary in a women's wear store at 771 Lexington avenue. He was convicted of terrorizing the proprietor, attempting to kill Patrolman Vespoli, who arrested him, and then attempting suicide. It was his first offense. He pleaded intoxication. The minimum sentence under the law under which he was convicted is ten years

Red Murray--Kidnaper

By J. B. WARRENTON

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

RED MURRAY, his massive shoulder hunched up to his cauliflower ears, sprawled on a bench in the Public Garden. Nothing unusual for a dispirited human piece of floatsam to be washed up high and dry on a park bench; but with Murray joining the nightly habitués of the Garden the under-world of Boston snickered.

Red and the police were not strangers, for the simple reason that he had been forced to receive their unwelcome attentions at various times, and the outcome was nearly always the same—a sojourn in jail. Red had been an expert cracksman, and a dexterous one for his years. He was nearing the thirties, a colossal mass of flesh and muscle, but lacked the brute instinct of the sinister crook in general. Born and raised in the "Cove" district, he flourished in its environments, but had given no thought to the nobler ethics and teachings of his good mother. A prize-fighter, gang-leader, and bad "actor," he reigned supreme in his crooked kingdom until he reached his majority. A few defeats in the squared circle and then he joined the human vultures of the night. He never toted a gun or any other weapon, always using his head and hands when discovered plundering by a male householder. If it happened to be the police, Red submitted without a struggle. For well he knew the department slogan:

"We'll get you anyhow; and when we do——"

Tonight he was undergoing a turbulent mental struggle between a set determination to behave or continue his evil career. If he reformed there was the danger of hunger and eviction for himself and the second human being he ever loved—his wife.

Norma Dacey and Red Murray were married over a year before. She, too, was a product of the "Cove," and, like Red, turned her back on righteousness. She chose the "easy" way, and at the time she married the cracksman her record at Police Headquarters tagged her as the most adroit pickpocket that ever "dipped for a roll." But all her past life was buried when she took up the burden of a wife. Her dormant intellect had awakened and animated her womanhood; and when one day a few weeks back she whispered a secret in her husband's ear Red chose the straight and narrow path.

"It's the only way, Red," she told him. "We want our kiddie to grow up straight and respect its parents."

"I'm on, honey," he promised. "I'll make good if de bulls 'll lay off."

But the "bulls didn't lay off"—at least a few of them didn't. For when Red found employment on the docks, big, square-jawed Pat Finnery of Headquarters grinned satanically when he spied him sweltering in the humid atmosphere of the dock-shed, then beckoned to the boss, a friend of his, and said leeringly:

"You had better watch dat guy. He's Red Murray, an' he might open dat sardine-can in th' office wid a toothpick if youse don't look out."

The result was the same everywhere the ex-thief secured work, until tonight, at the end of his resources, Red shivered and battled for the mastery of his better self.

With an oath he finally arose and kicked to the chill October winds a heap of fallen leaves that had gathered at his feet. Glaring menacingly at a spooning couple on the

opposite bench, he thrust his hands deep into his coat pockets and headed in the direction of the east gateway of the gardens.

"Hello, Red!"

A well-known voice brought him to a standstill. His head snapped up, and he growled a response to the speaker.

Detective-Sergeant Warren Bradley was the one who blocked the ex-cracksman's way and laid a hand lightly on his shoulder.

"What you want me for?" Red asked apprehensively. "I ain't done nothin'. You know, Bradley, dat I've been goin' straight; honest t' God I have."

His stoical tranquillity was stampeded for the first time in his life. But as he looked into the keen, gray eyes of the Headquarters man his fears subsided. Bradley was different, he knew. The underworld had termed him a "square dick."

"I know you've been going straight, Red," admitted the officer kindly, "but why this attitude—and at this hour? You know it's nearly ten o'clock. Why aren't you home with Norma?"

Bradley's face became set in grim lines and his eyes were steely when Red poured forth the story of his up-hill fight for an honest existence. The police were his adversaries, and they being in the ascendant, his failure followed, was the way Red put it.

"Go home, Red," ordered the detective-sergeant, "and see Norma. I'll look into your story, and I'll have Finnery and the others you mentioned on the carpet if you're telling the truth. I'm busy now—and so ought the whole department to be—with this kidnaping epidemic. Another one last night. But you run along, and I'll call in on you and Norma in a day or two. Maybe I can help you."

The kidnaping epidemic referred to by Bradley had been striking terror into the hearts and homes of the rich. For the last six months children had been stolen under the eyes of their nurses as they played in the parks in broad daylight. Exorbitant sums of money had been demanded for their safe return, and when the frantic parents acceded to the difficult terms the money was taken, but some of the children were not returned. Then the police were called in and the wheels of the whole department were set in motion. One day, like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, came the astounding report—Milbury Follet, the seven-months-old son of Governor Follet, had been stolen from the nursery of their palatial residence on Beacon Hill.

With some parting advice to the ex-cracksman Bradley went on his way. Cheered somewhat by the friendly officer's manner toward him Red stood for several seconds turning everything over in his mind. But an evil Fate was abroard that night in the form of a soap-box orator who had just entered the garden.

He was a bewhiskered man of heavy voice and flourishing gesture, who was inveighing against wealth, luxury, extravagance and the indifference shown by the rich to the sufferings of the poor.

"It's all wrong," he declared loudly. "It's a crime, that's what it is. We ain't got a decent living 'cause we can't have none. Must th' poor respect laws that has made them poor, and keep them so till they die? We're ground down and walked on, and most of th' time we ain't got no work. And when we ain't got no work, what are ye goin' to do? Answer me that?"

The orator's question met with prompt and unexpected response:

"You said it, friend; when we ain't got work what are we goin' t' do?"

The words were flung at the agitator by no other than Red, and the fierce vehemence in his voice collected a few stragglers that were sauntering by. Red's acerbity of spirit found expression in the words which he had uttered half-involuntarily. And had he been observant of the men that gathered around he might have noticed that from the moment of his outburst he was studied critically, and with the most eager interest, by one person who stood apart from the rest.

The orator, flattered by the momentary interruption of his tirade, took up the thread of his speech, and continued inveighing against social and industrial wrongs.

"If any of you guys swipe a ticker, or filch a roll," he bellowed on, "why do yer

do it? I'll tell ya why? Ain't it t' keep alive? An' I'll tell yo' right now, friends, if a guy an' his family is broke, an' starvin', he's got a right t' steal. Ain't those millionaires rotten with money damn thieves? Sure they are, or they wouldn't have their millions."

Red was thinking, and his evil genius was approving. The man on the side-line noted his interest and, evidently having reached a decisive resolve, he stepped up to Red and smiled.

"Pardon me for taking the liberty, friend, but you look as though you were one of the victims referred to by the gentleman who is lecturing. Let's take a walk, and if you'd like a little drink of something that will warm you up I'll lead you to it."

"All right," growled Red.

The stranger led the way from the garden and into a near-beer saloon. Finding an unoccupied table near the wall, they sat down.

"Now forget the Volstead law," said the stranger magnanimously, "and order what you want. Just like the old days; they've got it here."

"I can't help thinkin' 'bout dat soap-box orator," voiced Red; "when a guy's flat, wants a job, an' gets one, a spy tells der boss to work yo' ter death, an' den fire yo'. Ain't dat enough ter git yer set ter carry de stick?"

"You said it," smiled the other, his eyes contracting. The word "spy" had not escaped his notice.

Just then a waiter came along and leaned on the table. The stranger said a few words to him in an undertone, and he nodded and shuffled away.

"Out of work?" the stranger asked abruptly when the waiter had gone. "Sure you are," he answered in the second breath. "Broke, on the bricks, and all that sort of thing—eh?"

"You said it," Red burst forth. "But I don't give a hang for myself; it's de wife. An' she's goner—— Ah, gee! 'Tain't square!"

"I get your drift, my friend, and you're sure up against it. Let me tell you—that orator uttered a mouthful tonight when he said 'A man was a sucker not to steal when his family is hungry.' I'll go him one better than that; I'll say that he's no better than a murderer!"

The stranger watched Red keenly to note the effect of his opinion, and glowed with satisfaction that his views seemed to meet with the emphatic approval of his companion. So, leaning across the table, he placed his hand on the ex-cracksman's arm.

"Broke; not a chance to earn a nickel, and an ordeal facing your dear wife in a short time. Tough, my friend! What's your trade when you do work?"

The stranger's interrogation, coming so sudden after his commiseration, awakened Red to the realization that he was being questioned. He watched the other reflectively, his eyes half closed to hide the light of suspicion.

"What's this bird's game?" he was thinking. Was it mere sympathy, or did he suspect him of being an ex-con. and planned to use him? Well, whatever the game was, it was no go; he'd stick till the finish. So he replied:

"Me? Oh, I do anything dat there's a piece o' change in—if it's honest."

The other nodded, and asked:

"There's lots of things you'll need in a few weeks—I know, I'm a family man."

"Yes, I know what I'll need," retorted Red, savagely. "But how in blazes am I goner get 'em?"

"Easy enough if you've got the nerve," answered the stranger placidly. "There are folks not many yards from here that have bushels of coin. There's Major Stebbins, for instance. He's got a swell residence on Bay Road, and there's silver and priceless bricabrac lying around loose that would get you everything, and then some. Do I make myself plain?"

He had made himself plain enough, and the orator's words and the privation that menaced his wife and himself was slowly putting to rout Red's good intentions. It was also known to Red that the Stebbins house had been closed for some time. The Major and his wife were touring Europe. He was framing an answer when he was

aroused from his reverie by the voice of the stranger.

"Stebbins is one of the hogs that has too much, while we have nothing at all."

CHAPTER TWO

THE same thought was running in Red's mind. He began contrasting Stebbins's style of living with his own, and the resentment in his heart against the rich was growing with the gnawing of his stomach. The danger that threatened his wife for lack of money filled his heart with bitterness. He was willing to work and go straight, but they wouldn't let him. His enemies said he was a jail-bird, and then it was idleness for him. He'd show them. Red's thoughts had seemingly betrayed him, and the other mustered all his alluring eloquence to strike home. Looking Red square in the eye, he said in a cold, even voice:

"We've parried long enough on this question, my friend; so let's come to a showdown. I don't know who you are, or what you do—nor do I care. I can form my own opinion, but that's neither here nor there. You're broke and need money. I singled you out when you entered the Garden, and I think my estimate of you will run true to form. Now, do you want to make some money?"

The question, hurled snappily, galvanized the ex-cracksman to an erect position and he brought his clinched fist down on the table with a crash.

"Lead me to it!" he snarled.

"Good! Now listen," said the stranger. "The Stebbinses have been away for the six months, but are now on their way home. The servants are getting the house ready, and the silver and other valuables have been delivered to them today from a safe deposit vault. There are only a few domestics there, and they are a lot of dumbbells. We'll take a look in there tonight and make a clean-up. Are you on?"

The stranger had announced himself. He, too, was a crook, but one that Red never remembered having seen in the underworld. He was probably some out-of-stater that the police were after who picked Boston for a hide-out. Under Red's fiery thatch were more brains than a close observer would be inclined to credit him with. From a physiognomic view-point one would think that he lacked ordinary intellect. But Red was all alive now and setting in the game.

"What, me rob a house!" he whispered with feigned surprise. "How do yer get dat way, eh?"

The stranger waved his hand impatiently.

"Can that chatter, old-timer. The only halo around that bean of yours is that battered old derby hat you've got on. And I don't see any hump on your shoulders from a pair of sprouting wings. I'll fall for the wife stuff, but you—work? Don't make me laugh! What's the answer? Do you take it or leave it?"

"But I've been tryin' ter go straight," said Red, his tone almost pleading.

"And the result," sneered the other, pointing a finger at the ex-cracksman.

Red's brain was reeling. There was no alternative that he could see. He must do something to get money; and do it at once, even though he found another job. Detective Bradley had promised to shoo the bulls away, but he couldn't bank on that. Here was a crook willing to lead him to a rich haul that was waiting for some one to carry it away. No danger from a bunch of stiff-necked servants. Red shoved his hand across the table.

"You win! I'm game, and if there is a pinch—I couldn't be any worse off."

"You said it, and there won't be any pinch. My name is Tom Coffee. What's yours?"

The name that Red gave is a matter of no importance. It was not his right one, anyhow."

Coffee grasped Red's hand and shook it warmly, complimenting him as a man of pluck and readiness. Then, when he let go, Red found he had left a crisp ten-dollar bill in his hand. The feeling of the paper currency was the final link to their contract. The more he turned it over in his mind the more the old game appealed to him. For nearly ten years he had been a crook, so

why should a little job like the one suggested bother him? And besides, it coincided with his old conception of the property possession. He was going to take one more haul from those that had too much.

Coffee was gazing thoughtfully out of the window, and Red noted with approval the air of respectability which seemed to surround his new-found crony. He lacked the ear-marks of a professional housebreaker. He was lithe, rather slim, of steady gaze and confident bearing. Such a man would fill the rôle of selling counterfeit money to farmers.

After another round of America's outlawed beverage, Coffee arose and turned to Red.

"We'll go now, and we'll separate outside. If you're a native of this burg, you know where the house is; and I'll meet you there. It wouldn't do for certain gentlemen from Pemberton Square to see us together."

His words gave Red a queer sensation and the old disquieting realization of the fact that he was ventering forth on his old hazard, and in company with a man perhaps as well known to the police as he was himself. Try as he might, he was powerless to stem the rushing current that swept him on.

The southward flood of humanity had subsided when they reached the sidewalk, and after the warmth of the saloon the air, heavy with the mists of the late autumn, chilled Red and made him dig his hands into his pockets and swing along at a brisk clip. In so doing his fingers touched the crisp ten-dollar bill. That kindled his courage somewhat, and so with grim determination he took a better view of the outlook, and congratulated himself on his chance meeting with Tom Coffee.

As Red reached the corner of an intersecting street, from where the Stebbins residence could be seen through the shadows and sputtering arc-lights, Coffee emerged from an obscured doorway. His colorless, firmly compressed lips formed a fixed, thin, straight line that gave him a look of cold determination. Red wondered where his tools could be, and finally concluded that they must be stowed away in his pockets.

Coffee took no notice whatever of Red, only to pause for an instant when passing and say in an undertone:

"So far, so good. You keep a-going, and I'll meet you inside the entrance of the driveway."

Red nodded and resumed his walk.

CHAPTER THREE

"WELL, old-timer," whispered a voice at Red's side as he stepped gingerly into the driveway—the voice came from behind one of the stone columns that marked the entrance, and a hand gripped his arm—"ye're here."

It was Coffee, who guided Red up the path and behind the shrubbery. There he proceeded to coach the supposed "amateur" in the fine art of relieving the wealthy of their superfluities.

"I make it a rule, first," instructed Coffee, "to get the lay of the land. The bushes, for instance, make good hiding places. I've attended to that, so let's go."

Red's steps lagged somewhat, and Coffee, fearing he was getting "cold feet," spurred his new pupil with the old arguments, reminding him of the fabulous wealth of Stebbins and of the pinching poverty of his wife and himself. He relaxed a faint smile when the ex-cracksman's wild outburst apprised him that his eloquence was not wasted.

"I told yer I was wid yer!" hissed Red, savagely. "I need some of th' things these damn hogs has got! Show me where dat stuff's layin' 'round loose, an' I'll get it. An' God help any guy dat tries ter crab my game!"

Coffee squeezed his arm approvingly, then turned towards the house.

"From now on it's business—get me?" hissed Coffee. "This ain't no pink tea nor lawn party. You keep your bean, and remember I'm giving orders. And listen, bo"—his hot breath fanned Red's cheek as his lips touched his ear—"the first sign of yel-

low I see you show, I'll croak you if it's the last thing I ever do on earth! Now go to it."

Red whirled with a snarl. No one ever talked that lingo to him and got away with it. Tom Coffee was never so near in all his life of being beaten to a pulp. But evil Fate was still in their midst, and Coffee's detaining hand relaxed Red's taut muscles.

"Don't get sore; it won't do you any good. You just trust one that's old in the game, and think of your wife. You're in it as deep as I am now, and if the bulls pipe our lay, you'd get a stretch the same as I would."

Although his fingers twitched to teach his companion a lesson, Red saw the philosophy of Coffee's words, and therefore swallowed his resentment.

"Go ahead wid your orders," he growled.

They crawled through the bushes and to the open lawn that skirted the whole house. The only lights visible were one burning dimly in the hall and another in the garage, several yards from the house. There was not a sound from within or without the place, only the snapping of dead twigs beneath their feet and the rustling of falling autumn leaves.

"Sh-s-s!" sibilated Coffee, gripping Red's arm. "Just do what I say, and we'll make a haul tonight that'll put us straddling the world. Kick off those ground-grippers of yours and stick close to me."

They crept to the house in the shadow of the shrubbery, which the October frosts had stripped nearly leafless. Coffee, with dexterous hands, drew himself up hand over hand to the top of the piazza. Red slowly, but just as cleverly, was a close second when he swung his legs over the top.

"Down flat," whispered Coffee. "Then no one can lamp you from the road."

Red's grin was lost in the darkness. The ex-cracksman could afford to smile.

"Der cheap second-story worker," he thought with aversion. "I'd like t' show dat guy somethin'."

They wiggled their way towards a window, Coffee halting for a second to remove from an inside coat-pocket a light, slender steel jimmy. The windows were all locked, and after looking them over carefully to see if there were any burglar-alarms attached, he grunted and worked the jimmy under the bottom sash of one, snapping the lock with a sharp click. Red watched him indifferently.

Pausing for a moment, they listened. Hearing no sound, Coffee raised the window carefully, beckoned to Red, and they both entered. Within, they paused and listened again. Still no sound. Coffee snapped on his flashlight and permitted the gleam to oscillate slowly around the room. The costly furniture and hangings that were focused under the swinging beam had little effect on Red's apathy. Such gorgeous displays were merely inspirations to the crook.

Coffee inclined his head, and the two moved softly to a door and swung it open. Still no sound broke the silence. Again the flashlight was brought into play. In its penetrating quest it flashed its ray of light over a child's bed, and, as the light hovered for an instant, the covering moved and the faint cry of a baby came from the folds. Red stiffened, but remained silent. Coffee, with a snarling curse, snapped off the light. He moved carefully to the side of the bed and looked down at the squirming mite of humanity, muttering baby-talk in his endeavor to lull the child back to slumber. The crooning had its effect on the child, for the fretful crying ceased. Red, who knew nothing of babies, looked on in amazement at the other's resourcefulness.

Coffee then turned to Red, pointed at the bed, and hissed:

"You look after that whelp while I mosey around and rake in the stuff. If it opens its yap, choke it! Get me? That kid'll crab the whole works if it squawks again. And you know what that'll mean—stir, from one to twenty years. I'm off now. You keep that kid still if you have to kill it!"

At Coffee's murderous orders Red, who was shaking with passion, could hardly hold himself in check from taking the brute by the throat and meting out the same punishment to him that he ordered inflicted on the helpless baby. His whole nature re-

volted against Coffee, and he cursed himself for being such a fool as to listen to the cheap crook's tempting arguments. And then the coward ordering him to kill a baby—him, Red Murray, the crook, who never carried a weapon for fear that he might kill or wound some innocent defender of his property. With a snarl he took a step in the direction taken by Coffee, and again Fate intervened. A voice, gruff and heavy with sleep, broke the stillness.

"Say you, Della, are you awake?" a man's voice yelled. "Wake up! That blasted kid's crying!"

Stunned for the instant by the gruff masculine voice, and the unnatural parental execration voiced by the speaker, Red stood stock still.

"Damn you!" he muttered, shaking his fist in the darkness. "I'm sorry for that poor kid."

Once more the house became silent, and Red, left alone, tiptoed to where the baby lay. The thought of what his wife would say of him breaking his promise to her began to trouble his mind. Norma had a strict code of her own in regard to a vow. When she married Red, her promise to "honor and obey" was also a synonym to her reformation. And well he knew that even under the most trying circumstances she never wavered from the right path. But with the recollection of her circumstances—hunger and even death—Red snapped his teeth shut and muttered:

"I'm goner see it through, an' it'll be me last job. It's for her, an' she'll understand."

His thoughts then wandered to the baby on the bed. How strangely it thrilled him when Norma whispered that news in his ear. He could hardly restrain an impulse to smother the child on the bed with caresses, and to delude himself with the thought that his own baby was confronting him. Red's emotions overwhelmed his discretion, and he gently smoothed the covering over the child.

"I guess I'll take a squint at der kid," he resolved, peering into the baby's face. A pallid light from the harvest moon that seeped through the partly drawn window-shade revealed to his close scrutiny that the child was in a deep sleep.

The features were as placid as though its slumber had never been disturbed, and Red narrowed his eyes as something vaguely familiar swept across his mind. Try as he might, he could not recall who the child reminded him of.

"Guess I've got kids on der brain," he mused. "Dat one looks like a youngster I seen somewhere. But they all look alike."

In his meditative soliloquy his stooping body had unset his equilibrium, and in his frantic endeavor to recover his balance his hand pressed against the baby's body, and it awoke with a loud wail that seemed to fill the room with sound. For a moment Red's heart skipped a beat or two—but only for a moment. Quickly he was the alert, cunning cracksman again. He knew what would follow; flashing lights and armed servants swarming into the room. He reached the window and flung it open. Then his heart stood still!

"My God!" he gasped.

That cry would also bring Coffee—Coffee, who was searching the other rooms in the house for loot; the murderous beast that would strangle or smother the baby with a pillow, as he had threatened to do! Red's mind was made up in that flashing instant.

With a bound he was beside the bed again, and raised the child in his arms. Reluctantly, but he knew his safety depended on it, Red clapped his hand over its mouth to still its cries, slipped from the room, raced across the hall and hurried down the stairs.

At the bottom he halted for a moment to get the lay of his surroundings. He could hear much scurrying of feet from above, mingled with low growling and muffled oaths. Then a feminine scream came to his ears and its reverberation pierced the darkness.

"Godamighty, Jim; the kid's gone!" screamed a woman's voice.

(*Concluded in our next issue.*)

Cat-Feathers

By OLIVER GUY MAGEE

THE Persian lady sat at her lattice and looked out at the moonlit garden. Her large, placid amber eyes were round with the mystery of the night. A soft breeze came through the screen and stirred her long, silky white fur as she listened to a love-song of a feline admirer over beyond the roses.

"O Zuleika, cat of Persia, canst thou not come out and frivol with me?" warmbled the enamored one in purest Cat-ese.

Zuleika, with an expression of absolute disdain, flowed like a white stream from the window-sill to the floor and licked down a disheveled wisp of her snowy coat.

Those vulgar alley cats wearied her, she mused. Did they suppose a lady of her blood and breeding would dally with such a rabble? Anyhow, she did not care for cats. She knew her disposition was haughty, exclusive and irascible, but she believed this was counterbalanced by the strength of her one great attachment—that for her master, Tom Draycoll.

As she stretched out on the floor in a ray of moonlight and yawned, she marveled at the strength of her affection for him. Cats as a species, she reflected, did not feel strongly for mankind, but she—she loved Tom Draycoll as much as she hated every one else.

Why did he not come? Why did he leave her alone so much at night, cooped up in this stuffy apartment?

With petulant swirls of her pink tongue she tugged at an offending tuft of hair below her ruff, licked it gradually out into a little downy bunch, and left it lying on the floor as she walked sinuously into the kitchenette. Her saucer, in which Tom habitually placed carefully cubed bits of boiled liver, was empty. She knew when she went to it that she had laped it clean some time before, but she had become restless, aimless, uneasy. A premonition of coming disaster now filled her being. She uttered a deep, throaty wail, and scratched furiously on the table-leg with her front claws.

Why did Tom not come? She returned to the living-room and jumped back upon the window-sill. There she huddled into a disconsolate bundle of fur, white-petaled as a huge chrysanthemum, her thick ostrich-feather of a tail swaying pendant, and thought it all over.

Why *shouldn't* she love Tom Draycoll? Had he not fed her, pampered her, gratified her every whim—and they were many, she admitted to herself—all the three years of her life? She well remembered the day he had brought her from the Lady-Who-Raised-Cats, in a far city, when she was small enough to fit into his two cupped hands, a mere feline snowball. And she had climbed to his shoulder in the taxi and scratched his ear, too.

And that night—Christmas eve, time of strange happenings among humans—he had placed her behind the brilliantly lighted tree, and she had walked out beneath its tinseled branches, bewildered, dazzled—but no more so than Tom's little four-year-old niece, for whom she was intended as a gift. And when the niece's father, the Man-Who-Raised-Children, proved to be a hater of cats, Tom had kept her himself, and treated her as a queen.

Why did Draycoll not come? She was hungry—hungry at stomach and at heart. She fastened her limpid amber eyes on the white gate between the rose bushes and waited. It was here he was accustomed to

enter—softly. When he walked up the gravel path his footfalls were as silent as her own. Was there in his ancestry also a strain of the cat?

Just then a slight noise behind startled her. She could sense the pupils of her eyes dilate as she arched her back and watched, listened. The noise was in the kitchenette. It sounded like a window slipping up quietly, very quietly.

With a throb of joy and a warm, bird-like trill in her throat, Zuleika leaped from the window-sill and hurried into the kitchenette. It must be Tom coming in at the window.

But no, it was not Tom. There were two of them, a big one and a little one. The tall one's hair was gray, and his features cold and chiseled, a little cruel about the mouth. The other, expressionless, wore a small black mustache. She could see them in the dark kitchenette as plainly as though it were midday.

"Elkins," undertoned the tall man, raking the room with his electric flash-light, "there's the cat. This may be the place."

"Humph!" grunted the other listlessly.

The gray-haired one cast a keen glance about the kitchenette. He trod softly about the floor, as though seeking a loose board. He scanned the walls and corners carefully.

"Nothing here," he whispered finally. "Come on."

Carefully the two crept into the living-room. Again the close scrutiny of walls. The big man examined every inch of the floor, pulled aside rugs, pictures, books, searched the place thoroughly. He uttered a brief imprecation beneath his breath.

"Stung again, I wonder?" he questioned vaguely. The smaller man peered into the bath-room.

"Try this, Yates," he breathed.

Yates flashed the light-shaft about the bath-room with a professional air.

"Stung!" was his only comment, as he stepped into the bedroom. "Ah!" he continued softly, as the light flashed across the door, disclosing an extra bolt and chain. "More like it. And a fire-escape from the window. Well, well. This looks good."

Elkins brightened up. In the next few moments the two men eagerly searched the room with painstaking care. Everything had been left unlocked. A closet contained much modishly-tailored clothing. Drawers held garments of the finest quality.

Yates did not overlook the bed. He rammed his arm above the mattress and under the pillows. Floors, wall and brica-brac again came in for their share of attention. Finally Yates straightened up and relieved his feelings with a choice string of heartfelt expletives.

"Not here!" he swore. "Come on, let's get out."

Zuleika, her amber eyes almost sable, so dilated were the pupils, had followed the men from room to room, wondering what they could be about, and watching, watching. Her ruff and the hair of her back were half-risen and bristling. A sweep of the flash-light disclosed her to the intruders.

"Pretty cat, anyway," said Yates, stooping to the animal and snapping his fingers softly. "Here, kitty, kitty!"

How Zuleika hated that word "kitty!" How she hated strangers! How she hated almost everything and everybody except her master, Tom Draycoll!

With a "spit" like the hiss of a punctured bicycle tire she flashed out a foot, claws spread, and a trio of bleeding scratches instantly appeared on the back of Yates's hand.

"You she-devil!" he exclaimed, and aimed a savage kick at the furious creature. His foot missed Zuleika, but struck a pedestal bearing a large bronze bust of Shakespeare. With a crash both bust and pedestal fell to the floor.

The two men were startled. Yates turned off his flash-light, and they listened a moment in the dark, only their own breathing and the tick of the clock breaking the silence. After a time Yates flashed on his light. He stood as if in deep thought.

"Elkins, did you notice," he asked at length, "the queer sound that bust made when it fell?" He picked it up.

"This thing is too light for bronze," he whispered. He shook the bust and tapped it with the joint of his bent forefinger. Next he turned it upside-down and closely scru-

tinized the base in the light of his electric torch.

"Clever, clever!" he exclaimed under his breath. Elkins crowded close, looking over his shoulder.

"Here, Elkins, hold the light. There's a screw-cover here, like the top of a fruit-jar, flush with the bottom. Wait! Ah!"

The next moment Yates drew from the cavity of the bust a tightly-packed mass of tissue-paper. On the dressing-table he unfastened the packages. When he had finished the facets of diamonds, rubies and emeralds, and the rounded sides of pearls and fire-opals flashed back the torch's rays.

Aside from quick intakes of breath, the two men gazed in silence at the priceless collection of jewels.

"Well," Yates breathed after a time, "we've got 'em." He carefully stowed the gems away in his various pockets. "Elkins, put the bust back on the pedestal. Now, the next thing——"

His whisper trailed off into nothingness. Some one was at the apartment's outer door.

"Douse the light!" Elkins's whisper was almost panicky. The two men huddled in the darkness.

A key turned in the outer lock and the apartment door swung open and shut. A firm yet light step sounded in the next room. Zuleika, the cat, gave her throaty bird-trill of joy.

"Hello, sweetness," said a low masculine voice. Then a sound as of a decanter against a glass.

A moment later the man entered the bedroom. There was a little click, a metallic swishing sound. Then Yates moved the slide-catch of his flash-light.

Draycoll stood in its rays, the bust of Shakespeare inverted under his left arm, in the act of unscrewing a disk in the base. Between the thumb and forefinger of his left hand he held a magnificent diamond ring. A handsome fellow, front teeth rather far apart, hair brown and curly.

During four ticks of the clock he stood transfixed, his jaw dropping in surprise. Then suddenly he leaped forward, and there was a short, sharp struggle.

"Don't be foolish!" cried Yates. "Didn't you see we've got you covered."

Then handcuffs clicked on the young man's wrists. Elkins switched the incandescents. The prisoner straightened up with a bitter smile and shrugged.

"What's the idea, boys?" still smiling. "Why the surprise party?"

"Drop it!" growled Yates. "You're under arrest. I've got what was in the bust." He looked the prisoner over curiously. "Who'd have thought that you, the fashionable, popular Tom Draycoll, are the man who's been lifting the jewels of all the swell society dames around this summer resort? My! my! What a wagging of tongues there'll be when this comes out in the papers!"

"That's the worst of it." Young Draycoll lifted both manacled hands and wiped the beads of perspiration from his forehead. "Say, you're Yates, the detective, aren't you?"

The gray-haired man nodded.

"How did you do it? How did you track me? I was so careful I didn't think you fellows had a clue to work on."

The detective's stern face broke into a dozen tiny laughing wrinkles.

"I'm bound to admit you're a slick one, young fellow. But like many another man, you were betrayed by a woman."

"By a woman!" Young Draycoll's eyes blazed. "Bosh! No woman knew a thing about it."

"That may be, but a female it was that gave you away."

Yates pointed to Zuleika, who was affectionately rubbing against Draycoll's leg.

"There's the lady, right there."

The young man stared.

"Zuleika!" incredulously. "This is no time for joking."

"Every place where a robbery was committed," went on the detective, "the upholstery and hangings had fine white hairs clinging to them. It looked as though a cat might have rubbed against them. Yet only one of the families owned a cat, and that wasn't a white one. Naturally I made up my mind the hairs came from the trousers or skirts of some one whose pet

cat rubbed against them frequently and plastered them up with cat-feathers."

"Cat - feathers!" Young Draycoll frowned.

"Exactly! Like you've got on your pants-legs now. You've got a good start for a pair of chaps, young man. Well, the hairs were so long and fine I knew they must have come from a Persian cat. This resort is not so large, and there couldn't be many Persian cats in the town. People whose tastes run toward that expensive breed of cats were practically certain to be of the fashionable, well-groomed type, who would keep their clothing in good shape. So I went around to the clothes-cleaning and pressing shops and got the names of all the people whose clothes were decorated with long white cat-feathers when they were received. There were only six.

"It isn't so easy to get rid of a lot of big jewels, and I didn't think the thief had had a chance to dispose of the stuff. I reasoned it must be hidden where he or she lived. It was necessary to find the loot in order to know I had the right party.

"Of course, it was all a slender chance. It was quite possible the criminal did not send clothing to a presser, at least to a local one. He might not even live in the resort, but hang out in a neighboring town. And he might not secrete his booty at his lodgings. But there is an element of chance in everything, and a big chance often results in a big catch. My instinct told me I was right, and I was very anxious to try my theory out. Had to make it a gum-shoe job to keep the unknown crook from getting wind of us and clearing out. Yours was the fourth place we tried."

Yates chuckled. "Even then we wouldn't have found the stuff if your Zureika, or whatever you call her, hadn't scratched me and I hadn't kicked at her and knocked over the bust. The old recipe for catching a crook is as good as ever—'find the woman!'" And Yates's stomach heaved in a noiseless laugh.

But Draycoll did not laugh. He stooped and stroked Zuleika's disheveled coat.

"Poor little Zuleika!" he murmured. "What's going to become of you?" Could it be that a film of moisture glistened in his eyes—for a *cat?*

"She's just like a baby," he added. "My fault. Pampered her till she can't take care of herself like an alley cat. Can't even let her outside when I'm not at home, for fear she'll be hurt or stolen. What'll become of her?"

The older man regarded him in quizzical silence.

"I've got a couple of kids at home," he drawled finally, "that like cats. I'll take care of your cat for you till you get out of this—if she lives that long."

He laid his hand on the other's shoulder. "And, my boy," his voice softened, "I'm thinking that a man that's got heart enough in him to be kind to a cat ought to go into a different line of business—when he gets the chance."

Tom Draycoll's one-sided smile, showing his far-apart teeth, and his little grimace indicated that doubtless he, too, was of that opinion.

As for Zuleika, perhaps she was stunned with the realization of being the instrument of her master's downfall, perhaps she was merely appreciative of the officer's offer of protection. Be that as it may, as the detectives prepared to leave with their prisoner, she departed from her usual belligerent attitude toward strangers, and permitting Yates cautiously to pick her up, quietly snuggled in the hollow of his arm.

Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

9 "Mr. Bachellor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by C. F. Oursler.
13 "Under a Mask," By Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by C. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by R. Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29 "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith S. Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by B. Poynter
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieut. Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by Wm. H. Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by Chas. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign of the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura R. Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William H. Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by E. Rosemon
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by Wm. H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
62 "The Velvet Touch," by Julian Darrow.
63 "The Clue of the Red Lamp," by C. F. Oursler.
64 "The Scheme of Solomon Snare," by W. Osborne.
65 "Quicker Than the Eye," by Ralph Cummins.
66 "The Clue of the Dark Room," by H. Craigie.
67 "The Tongue of Osiris," by Marc Edmund Jones.
68 "Detective Wade's Big Case," by E. Rosemon.
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73 "The Psychic Enemy," by Arthur Wm. Anderson
74 "The Wonder Girl," by Ralph Cummins.
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81 "Professor Satan," by Charles Fulton Oursler.
82 "Who Killed McNally?" by Beulah Poynter.
83 "The Clue of the Whorl," by Katherine Stagg.
84 "The 'Czar' and the Ring," by Edmund Elliot.
85 "The Clue of Flame," by Jack Bechdolt.
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119 "Trailed by a Private Detective," by Gottlieb Jacobs.
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122 "The Clawing Death," by Beulah Poynter.
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142 "Blood Rubies," by J. Werner Phelps.
143 "I'll Win! I'll Win!" by Arthur B. Reeve and Margaret W. Reeve.
144 "Phantom Fingers," by George Bronson-Howard.
145 "On the Yellows," by Frank Blighton.
146 "The Argentine Ruby," by Beulah and Shirley Poynter.
147 "The Barrington Arms Case," by Jack Bechdolt.
148 "Hounded," by Frank Blighton.
149 "Direct Action," by Dr. Harry Enton.
150 "The Footprints On the Ceiling," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
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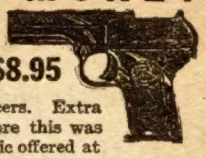

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